BY EDGAR JOHNSON

FICTION

UNWEAVE A RAINBOW: A SENTIMENTAL FANTASY

THE PRAYING MANTIS

LITERARY CRITICISM

ONE MIGHTY TORRENT: THE DRAMA OF BIOGRAPHY

BIOGRAPHY

A TREASURY OF BIOGRAPHY [*Editor*]

A TREASURY OF SATIRE

BY EDGAR JOHNSON



Including the World's Greatest Satirists, Comic — Tragic, from Antiquity to the Present Time, Selected and Edited, with Critical and Historical Backgrounds, and an Introduction on the Nature and Value of Satire

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THE THEORY of satire which I have outlined in the introductory essay to this volume, and which is developed more fully in my critical *Analysis of Satire*, soon to be published, does not, so far as I am aware, lean very heavily upon previous writers on satire. I should like, however, to express my appreciation of the stimulating insights of Kenneth Burke, with whom I have had many conversations on the theme, and who has also touched upon it, always suggestively, in his *Attitudes Toward History* and *Philosophy of Literary Form*. Helpful, too, have been the agreements and disagreements of my colleague, Professor Theodore Goodman, and the enthusiastic interest and useful questions of the classes in satire that I have conducted for the past ten years at the New School for Social Research and the Graduate School of the College of the City of New York.

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A TREASURY
OF SATIRE

THE NATURE AND VALUE OF SATIRE



I. What Satire Is

THERE wouldn't be much exaggeration in saying that everybody recognizes satire and that nobody knows what it is. For satire is more common in everyday speech than it is brandishing sword or bludgeon and formally labeled as satire in books. The laughing quip, the rough jest, that explodes and scatters a critical light over its victim, probably crackled back and forth among the builders of the Pyramids and of the Roman aqueducts, just as it does among the builders of skyscrapers and hydroelectric dams. The sly remark leaving a delayed poison of meaning behind it was doubtless as favored by the ladies of Nineveh as by ladies who dwell in apartment hotels and metropolitan suburbs. Sharp tongues, subtle tongues, sarcastic tongues: *there is a tincture of satire in all of these, identified and sometimes* resented even by those who may never have heard the word satire. (This may be why some folk don't like it in literature. We all know the argument: "There is so much unpleasantness in life, I don't know why we must have it in art.")

We Americans in particular are such addicts of satire that we have domesticated it for daily use, in the form of the "wisecrack," which crepitates everywhere in our national life, from bar and office to burlesque show,

lecture platform, musical comedy, radio, and newspaper column. Every machine shop, assembly line, and railway yard has its rough wits ready to reduce an inflated ego among their fellow workers. Our soldiers compose little ditties—

> The coffee in the Army
> Is very, very fine:
> It's good for cuts and bruises
> And it tastes like iodine—

and invent brilliantly revolting names for articles of diet they do not care for. I am subject to correction, but I feel doubtful if German soldiers openly sing any such ironical paeans to an efficient Nazi commissary. And we have a long tradition of homespun wit, running all the way from Ben Franklin's *Poor Richard* and the crackerbox philosophers through Josh Billings and Mark Twain (both in his *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and in his personal utterances) to Mr. Dooley and F. P. A. It rings in the invective and braggadocio of flatboatmen, loggers, cowhands, and Californians, bursts into the tall tale and the legendary cycles of jokes about tin lizzies and Samuel Goldwyn; grins through the nicknames we bestow upon public figures: "Old Fuss-and-Feathers," "Jubilee Jim," "Hit and Muss." It makes its way into folk idiom, revealing the very operations of satire in those homely and vivid phrases which note some "blowhard" or "hot-air artist" getting his "come-uppance" or being "taken down a peg or two." Satire in books is only a flowering of this vigorous growth.

But what is the satiric "essence" that breathes in all these, the dirty dig, the wisecrack, the sarcasm, the literary satire? Satirists themselves haven't agreed with each other on what it is they do, queerly enough, they haven't even seemed to notice their own practice. Some satirists go around thinking of themselves as ferocious censors of society slogging away angrily at bad manners and corrupted morals, and quite fail to notice that they are really high-spirited fellows full of honest hilarity. Joseph Hall, who boasted himself the first English satirist, said that

> The satire should be like the porcupine
> That shoots sharp quills out in each angry line,

and brings a blush of shame, he winds up triumphantly, to the cheek of the guilty reader. Dryden seems to have accepted this view of satire as an agent of harsh correction, but it is hard to detect any reformatory zeal in *Mac Flecknoe* and the booby-trap denouement of its coronation scene. And although Byron tells us that satiric derision is for him only a refuge from melancholy—

> If I laugh at any mortal thing
> 'Tis that I may not weep—

his readers cannot feel that any such depth of gloom animated the frisky passages of *Don Juan*. Who believes that Byron's heart was sobbing "*Ridi, pagliaccio*" as he described Julia berating her husband for his base suspicions of her chastity while Juan almost smothers under the heaped-up bedclothes between her thighs? Who imagines that cosmic despair is behind the picture of Southey reciting his *Vision of Judgment* and setting all Heaven's teeth on edge?

It is not true, then, that satire is all censure, sadness, and misanthropy. The very satirists who most vehemently and solemnly claim it as an instrument of castigation often have a lot of gaiety in their satire. But there are others who say it is the satirist's business to laugh away the absurdities of mankind by blowing them into annihilation on a gust of ridicule, and who don't observe that some of their own most valuable satire is disillusioned to the verge of tragic horror. Such satire may retain the form of derision but contain no more of the soul of laughter than the Fool's bitter and foreboding jokes in *King Lear*. It is laughter from the teeth out, really a hostile snarl, the mere grimace of amusement when the mirth is gone, like the Cheshire Cat's grin remaining after the Cat has faded away. And in the depths of tragic satire there may be no longer the tone of even the wriest jesting, but the voice of Isaiah or Job, the agony of Swift's despair.

Satire thus may range all the way from high-spirited mockery to torment. The crowds thronged before the monkey cage in the zoo laugh to see themselves caricatured by the antics going on behind the bars; satirists have seized upon the same resemblance. "Man, proud man," says Shakespeare,

> like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
> As make the angels weep.

More gaily, Thomas Love Peacock devises his Sir Oran Haut-Ton, an orangutan, to parody the Rousseauistic doctrine of the Natural Man, and Clarence Day, in *Our Simian World*, makes a whimsically witty analysis of the apishness of human beings. Or take George Bernard Shaw's use of the same image. A famous bacteriologist had opposed the monkey-gland treatment for rejuvenation, arguing that it might sow in the human organism the cruelty and sensuality of the ape. Shaw's reply purported to be written by Consul, a famous performing chimpanzee:

> "Has any ape ever torn glands from a living man to graft them upon another ape for the sake of a brief and unnatural extension of that ape's life? Was Torquemada an ape? Were the Inquisition and the Star-Chamber monkey-houses? . . . Has it been necessary to found a Society for the Protection of Ape Children, as it has been for the protection of human

children? Was the late war a war of apes or of men? Was poison gas a simian or a human invention? How can Dr. Bach mention the word cruelty in the presence of an ape without blushing? We, who have our brains burnt out ruthlessly in human scientists' laboratories, are reproached for cruelty by a human scientist! . . . Man remains what he has always been; the cruellest of all the animals, and the most elaborately and fiendishly sensual. Let him presume no further upon this grotesque resemblance to us; he will remain what he is in spite of Dr. Voronoff's efforts to make a respectable ape of him."

The tone here is more deeply serious than in either Peacock or Day, but the technique is still that of wit, and our perceptions are sharpened by laughter. But who can laugh at Swift's loathsome description of the Yahoos, with their love "of nastiness and dirt," their "stink . . . somewhat between a weasel and a fox," and their leaping up into the branches of the tree against which Gulliver backs to defend himself, and discharging their "filthy excrements of yellow liquid substance" all over his clothes? The tone of nauseated disgust Swift establishes is deepened as he analyzes their character and we are made to realize that they are symbols of humanity itself. Shaw's indignation could still vent itself in laughter; in Swift laughter has been consumed by hatred and horror.

Aldous Huxley also uses this image of the Angry Ape. In his *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, the Fifth Earl of Gonister, an eighteenth-century aristocrat, has discovered the means of an indefinite prolongation of life. But with advancing centuries of existence he gradually degenerates into a hideous Struldbrug-like anthropoid monster inhabiting a foul den filled with an intolerable stench. "The shirt, which was his only garment, was torn and filthy. Knotted diagonally across his powerful chest was a broad silk ribbon" that had once been the blue Order of the Garter. "With one of his huge and strangely clumsy hands, he was scratching a sore place that showed red between the hairs of his left calf." "Without moving from where he was sitting, the Fifth Earl urinated on the floor." The reader who is impelled to laugh at this passage has a strong stomach and a strange sense of humor.

Our illustrations prove, and it cannot be too emphatically stated, that satire does *not* have to arm or disguise itself with comedy. Tragic satire need no more involve laughter than the happy laughter of children or the tender laughter of lovers involves satire. A distinguished company of commentators have thus been quite wrong in declaring, as Dr. Richard Garnett, for example, does in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, that humor

must always be "a distinctly recognizable element" in satire. Dr. Garnett adds, "without humor, satire is invective"; so it may be, without ceasing to be satire. A great deal of Sinclair Lewis and Juvenal *is* invective. Let anyone clock the laughs in Juvenal or the last voyage of *Gulliver,* and argue that these works are not satire because they do not roll us in the aisles, seldom even make us chuckle, or argue that only those parts of them are satire which can raise some ghost of a smile.

No description of satire can hold water unless it takes *all* the aspects of satire into account. Sometimes the satirist tumbles in giggling, thumbing his nose, wielding slapsticks and bladders, smacking people on their fannies, and administering electric shocks. Sometimes he bawls abuse or hisses denunciations, flays his victim and then pours burning oil or acid in the wounds. Sometimes, austere as Dante stalking through the murk of hell, he grimly describes evil fallen into its proper torments, plunged in flame or locked in thick-ribbed ice. The one ingredient common to all these activities, from satire in cap-and-bells to satire with a flaming sword, is *criticism.* Even laughing satire is laughing-at, not merely irresponsible laughing. It invites us not to let down our back hair and relax, but to lift up our eyebrows and mock. The "crack" in the wisecrack is the crack of the whip, and it is never more effective than when it cuts into someone's hide.

But criticism alone is not enough to define satire. Every time a book reviewer says that Peewit has written another lousy novel or a film critic remarks that Hollywood's latest epic stinks he isn't necessarily one with Juvenal and Swift. Satire's criticism must be criticism with a difference. Don't tell me now that the difference is that satire is laughing criticism. We've just been through all that, when we proved that a lot of satire doesn't evoke laughter, so will you please stop arguing and let me get on? Unless Juvenal's *Sixth Satire,* socking the feminine sex all over the lot, and Swift's *Modest Proposal,* and Sinclair Lewis rubbing salt into Buzz Windrip and Elmer Gantry aren't satire at all, there doesn't have to be a snicker in satire.

Let us note in passing that you can't satirize innocent weakness, suffering, or misfortune. No one satirizes a child for being so contemptibly weak that it doesn't beat up a brutal father, or a man dying of cancer for being so stupid as to let himself be afflicted with the disease. We mock the staggerings of a drunkard, but not those of a toddling infant. When the Judge in *Erewhon* sentences a man for the capital crime of tuberculosis, Butler's satire is not directed against the defendant. If we read that a chance passer-by has been shot in a bank holdup, we do not say, "the more fool he." Nor do we sneer at those who were so foolish as to let themselves fall into the hands of the Gestapo. And even evil, when it is fallen into misery and

has lost its power to do harm, we do not deride unless we have been made cruel by the memory of its past misdeeds. When Gratiano mocks Shylock after his defeat at law—

> In christening thou shalt have two godfathers;
> Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
> To bring thee to the gallows, not the font—

many readers feel something horrible in his vindictiveness.

But satire everywhere attacks evil arrogant and triumphant, pride victorious and riding for a fall. It attacks those conventional respectabilities which are really hidden absurdities or vices blindly accepted by thoughtlessness, habit, or social custom. It attacks foolishness foolishly convinced that it makes sense, grinning and unrepentant in its folly. It attacks stuffed shirts, hypocrisies aping merit, puffed and blown-up insignificances like the frog trying to swell itself into an ox, counterfeit passing for true. The merely foolish, satire may be content to "take down a peg or two"; the dangerous and vicious it would reduce to ruin. But in both the important thing to note is a kind of *unmasking*. The foolishness shown up is a foolishness that usually passes for sense. The ugliness revealed in its true colors has masqueraded as merit.

"The vices that call for the scourge of satire," observes Sylvan Forester in *Melincourt*, "are those which pervade the whole frame of society, and which, under some specious pretence of private duty, or the sanction of custom and precedent, are almost permitted to assume the semblance of virtue, or at least to pass unstigmatized in the crowd of congenial transgressions."

The essential trick of satire is a dexterous stripping away of false fronts. We all know how the big-time baseball players have been made into idols of the American public. See Ring Lardner, then, showing up his athletes in *You Know Me, Al* as a bunch of dumbclucks inflated with immeasurable conceit. And through his pages moves a host of others: the mean millionaire who cheats himself at golf, the devoted couple whose golden wedding marks fifty years of stupefying boredom with each other, the village cutup whose practical jokes are born of malice and cruelty, the movie magnate whose Long Island home presents a façade of domestic bliss behind which his wife is drinking herself into insensibility. Our captains of industry and Napoleons of finance are publicized as brainy and heroic figures for every boy to model himself upon. Sinclair Lewis presents these businessmen through the images of George F. Babbitt, Sam Dodsworth, the financiers Martin Arrowsmith meets after he joins the McGurk Institute, the Colonel Charles B. Marduc of *Gideon Planish*.

Experimental science has come to enjoy enormous prestige in our time.

Observe George Bernard Shaw taking a swipe at *it*, by telling how the biologist Weismann set about proving there could be no such thing as inheritance of acquired characteristics: "He got a colony of mice, and cut off their tails. Then he waited to see whether their children would be born without tails. They were not, as Butler could have told him beforehand. He then cut off the children's tails, and waited to see whether the grandchildren would be born with at least rather short tails. They were not, as I could have told him beforehand. So with the patience and industry on which men of science pride themselves, he cut off the grandchildren's tails, and waited, full of hope, for the birth of curtailed great-grandchildren. But their tails were quite up to the mark, as any fool could have told him beforehand. Weismann then gravely drew the inference that acquired habits cannot be transmitted."

Now, naturally, if the satirist is going to take potshots at everything that has a lot of power and prestige he has to watch out how he does it. People of importance don't like being shown up as fools, scoundrels, or fakers, and they're apt to have ways of making their resentment felt. They don't like it even when they themselves are not mentioned by name, when it's merely somebody like themselves, when it's only the group they belong to that is criticized or derided. Let me use millionaires as an example. Millionaires are apt to feel very tender of the good name of millionaires. They will hire public-relations counsels and form national chambers of commerce and go to a good many lengths to be well thought of, short of ceasing to be or behave like millionaires. And many of us who are not millionaires also dislike hearing them criticized. This is sometimes because the criticism is of what we ourselves should like to be, sometimes because we resent being made to realize that we were taken in by very ordinary or inferior persons, sometimes merely because it is painful to be made to think and change our minds. All these obstacles the satirist finds in his path.

This enables us to say, I think, what satire really is. It is criticism getting around or overcoming an obstacle. Let me call this obstacle the Censor. The Censor is always insisting that we mustn't say or oughtn't to say certain things. To a lady who complained that somehow, she couldn't explain how, her fingernails were always getting dirty in London, Samuel Johnson replied, "Perhaps, madam, you scratch yourself." Now, good manners don't *allow a gentleman to tell a lady that she herself is dirty, but Johnson's form* of words gets around the Censor; he says it without saying it. He even extorts a certain admiration from us by being able to say it. Satire thus becomes a sort of licensed "bad form."

Somewhere in Freud's *Wit and the Unconscious* there is an anecdote telling how a powerful member of the Convention during the French Revo-

lution tried to wither an opponent of vulgar origin by asking, "Is it true, as I have been told, that the member from Arcis is a veterinary?" The veterinary replied sweetly, "Yes, *monsieur*. Are you ill?" The intended victim has proved, by courteous self-control, that he is a gentleman whatever his background, he has insulted the insulter under a pretense of solicitude, and he has shown that the attempted sneer labels which of the two is the real vulgarian. By doing so, furthermore, he has risked the danger of violent reprisal, and thereby proved himself a man of courage as well. But morally his position has become impregnable, since if his opponent is reduced to an oath or a blow it is a confession of having had the worst of the exchange.

These witty retorts are satire in the bud. Presently we shall have to examine with more care how Johnson and the veterinary were able to get away with them, and win our sympathy in doing so. At the moment we shall note only that the devices they employ are directed toward enabling the satirist to evade or outwit or override the Censor. Sometimes he uses ironical commendation, sometimes circumlocution or insinuation, sometimes he hides his meaning in symbolic masks; sometimes he poses as your friend or disguises himself as a mere prankster. He has loads of other tricks up his sleeve, which we shall see illustrated in this volume, from Horace to A. P. Herbert, from Voltaire to Thorstein Veblen, from Cervantes to Ogden Nash, and from Lucian to Sinclair Lewis. The white flour and grease paint of the clown are merely the most popular of these protective colorings, partly because they are the safest, partly because they offer his audience the most heartily enjoyable compensations for being forced to think and perhaps condemn themselves. That, of course, is why so many people are convinced that satire is nothing else but a comic liaison between criticism and high jinks.

The Censor operates in many realms and on many levels. The Censor may be merely the taken-for-granted, the unthought-about. He may be convention, custom, or good taste. The Censor is orthodoxy, satire is subversive. The Censor is solemn right-thinking, satire is irreverent or blasphemous. The Censor is the established ways of doing things in literature, art, science, law, society. He may be the dominant political party or the dominant forms of political thought. He may be the defender of Church and State, the Moral Law and the Starry Heavens.

The risks the satirist runs in the enterprise of outwitting the Censor may be no worse than flouts or sneers, and they may move on through a whole scale of official censorship to social ostracism and legal punishment. Tom Paine had to flee arrest in England for putting in plain words what Voltaire had been hinting by subtle indirections all his life. There is a certain justice

in Kenneth Burke's paradoxical declaration: "We might even say that the conditions are 'more favorable' to satire under censorship than under liberalism—for the most inventive satire arises when the artist is seeking simultaneously to take risks and escape punishment for his boldness, and is never quite certain himself whether he will be acclaimed or punished."

But the Censor also establishes himself far more intimately than as an external Policeman threatening with rubber hose and club. Within the satirist's own heart he may insinuate himself as Conscience and Self-respect. Then the satirist's dodges can become—in part at least—an endeavor to hide from himself how little he desires to ride the bandwagon of respectable sentiments. Further, our feelings about many things outside ourselves are so deeply ambiguous, love and hatred so entangled in mingling strands, that we cannot attack a thing we hate without endangering a thing we love. Torn between such divided loyalties, by what devious attack can the satirist conceal from himself that he is secretly undermining something he himself holds dear! Deepest of all, this inward censorship may enable the satirist to diminish a private burden of guilt by projecting upon the world the weaknesses he feels within himself. Ridicule and self-ridicule, hatred and self-hatred, love and loathing, are intertwined as if Laocoon were at once himself and the constricting serpents. Thus "the satirist attacks *in others*," as Burke says, "the weaknesses and temptations that are really *within himself*." Such a "socialization of losses," he adds later, is a clue to the "*twisted tragedy* behind Swift's satire, whereby he uses such thinking, not to *lift himself up*, but to *pull all mankind down* (the author himself being caught in the general deflation)."

These last aspects of satire help explain, I think, why we all enjoy satire, even those of us who demand that the satirist not "go too far." We all feel guilty about some things; and we all like on occasion to cut loose. These are the psychological foundations of the doctrine of original sin and the drunken binge. The one is a socialization of losses. if we are guilty, so is all humanity, and it's not our fault anyhow because we were born that way. The other is enjoyed for the same reasons that Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* shows the members of the Ancient and Fraternal Order of Mammals enjoying their convention at Atlántic City.

By the time we are grown up Dame Civilization gets most of us housebroken pretty well. But somewhere within us Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn still lurk, waiting to break through a thousand restrictions, bursting with wild boy-rebellion. No matter how tamed we may be, the live animal is there. The satirist enables us to kick over the traces, in thought at least, and still feel justified by the "good reasons" he gives us He shows us Mrs. Grundy as a sham, the pillars of society as whited sepulchers, and the

Great and Good as stuffed shirts. This is fun because it is release; and it establishes itself as right by convincing us that it is sanity.

Even comic satire derives its significance from its truth. We laugh at seeing some overblown pretension deflated, some mounted gasbag tumbled in the common mud. There is a sort of astringent joy merely in seeing a sham, or rather seeing through it, in bursting the hot-air balloon with a wicked pinprick. The combination of hostility, sanity, and high spirits can be fun in a cockeyed world. But the revelations of tragic satire may be too dreadful for laughter. You can't laugh if the compassionate mask of Mother Church is torn off and the jowls of Moloch are revealed beneath, or if the triumphal chariot of progress is suddenly perceived as the car of Juggernaut, or if mankind is seen as a perfumed and tailored Yahoo. Only by ignoring its meaning can the fall of Man become a pratfall.

And consequently people have often felt that there is something ill-humored about satire. Its laughter hardly conceals a sneer of scorn; its tragic seriousness has an odor of bitter almonds. Isn't there, they may ask, a kind of moral jaundice in a vision so colored with ridicule or disgust? An eye blind to merit, they might say, and a nose sharp for evil are the satirist's distinguishing traits, Skippy's "Always belittlin' " his motto.

Sometimes the accusation has a partial truth. To the sad and angry heart of Swift, to the Lucretian laughter of Anatole France, virtue was less visible than vice. But the vice they saw was real. We cannot deny it because it was almost all they saw; any more than we could call Leeuwenhoek's microbes a delusion because he saw them everywhere. Satire is the antidote to Pollyanna and Dr. Pangloss, with their rose-colored image of a best of all possible worlds. At its sanest and most penetrating it does not cancel distortion with counterdistortion. It merely focuses our gaze sharply upon the contrast between things as they should be and as they are.

II. How Satire Works

Truth can often be spoken with impunity; home truth seldom. And yet home truths are the kind satire deals in. Unless the satirist just happens by sheer luck to have some disarming characteristic, his telling of home truths must be a shrewdly planned campaign aided by all the devices of strategy and every instrument of psychological warfare. The weapons in his arsenal may range not only from stilettos to battering-rams; they may

include all sorts of unorthodox and undignified devices—custard pies, poisoned needles, pots of paint, sledge hammers, pancake batter, the wildest inventions of Rube Goldberg.

No doubt those the satirist exploits will be those which come easiest to him. One satirist has a foolish, clownish manner; another a sleepy innocence that lulls suspicion of his meaning anything in particular until our minds are snared; a third the chip-on-the-shoulder truculence of a belligerently honest man; a fourth the relentless pressure of an inevitable logic. Like the rest of us, satirists work away on what they're good at and turn occasionally to whatever else seems to be needed. No satirist uses a single method only, but each has his favorites. Swift's was irony; Frank Sullivan's is an insane sequence of association.

Neither irony nor insanity is necessarily satire, of course. When Oliver Herford said that his wife had a whim of iron, that was witty irony; it understates the degree of the lady's determination and at the same time implies the triviality of the desires her will was exercised upon; and it is satire. But every time a husband calls his wife "the little woman," although he may be understating her size he does not have to be satirizing her bulk. Nor is all craziness of association satiric; it may be mere jovial horsing around. The same thing is true of all the instruments of satire. A frying pan is a weapon only when it is used as a projectile or for knocking someone on the head.

Roughly, satire has two main methods. The method of Juvenal and Sinclair Lewis and Dickens is to attack furiously with blunderbuss or cudgel. That is direct satire. The other is more roundabout. Instead of meeting the foe upon the field it may pretend to be a neutral and undermine him by suave and diplomatic ways. It may masquerade as a friend or as one of his own defenders and insidiously destroy his faith in himself. Such is the strategy of Anatole France and, in milder vein, of Jane Austen. It is indirect satire.

Direct satire is the more obvious of the two, just as a blow is a more obvious expression of resentment than a gift of poisoned fruits. That is why invective is the simplest of all the weapons of direct satire. It is bludgeon and battle-ax beaten into words. It is the weapon we most instinctively seize when any restraint denies the resort to force. We find it in John L. Lewis's denunciation of former Vice-President Garner as "a labor-baiting, poker-playing, whisky-drinking, evil old man." We find it in truck drivers leaning from their lofty thrones and roaring imputations against the chastity of our mothers if we venture to dispute their monopoly of the public highway. We find it also, voiced with more adroitness, in the language of the drawing room. When Witwoud, in *The Way of the World*, speaks of "the fool my

brother," and hastily disavows the relationship by adding that they are only half brothers, "Then 'tis possible," Mirabell replies, "he may be but half a fool."

We might think at first that mere abuse would have little force except to the abuser. But this is not quite true. We seldom mind hearing others abused, unless they are our friends, and even then we may not always be displeased. "Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant," Byron calls Castlereagh, and adds:

> The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
> With just enough of talent, and no more,
> To lengthen fetters by another fixed,
> And offer poison long already mixed.

Unless we happen to be partisans of Castlereagh, we are not apt while the invective is eloquent and fired by anger to ask ourselves whether or not it is just. And, indeed, indignation is strong testimony, if not to the truth, at least to the sincerity of the speaker. The man who is carried away by the strength of his emotions has no disposition to cringe and to mince words; where there is so much fire, we unconsciously reason, there must be fuel. There is something almost terrible in the beautiful anger of a Shelley.

The very truculence of the satirist may sometimes convince us of his honesty and courage. A man of surly virtue, he growls his sentiments to all mankind, like Diogenes telling Alexander the Great to stand out of his light. "By God, I cannot flatter," such men appear to say to the world; their diatribes fall with no respect to persons. They may be disliked, they cannot be despised, they can hardly be ignored save by deliberately closing our ears. Rough and impolitic, they extort our grudging respect by the very rudeness that seems a liability. They batter down our objections by sheer violence.

Even when we ourselves feel the lash, invective may still achieve its purpose. If we know we are innocent, to be sure, we may meet abuse with anger or with calm scorn. But complete innocence is rare· against a secret sense of guilt the violence of the satirist is like a furious inquisitor assaulting the conscience. Even as we shout stormy denials his onslaught may have pierced our defenses.

One great danger the invective satirist risks is that of seeming to be animated by personal venom. It is a danger Pope runs and, despite his inordinate brilliance, does not always escape. His verses, Lytton Strachey comments, resemble "spoonfuls of boiling oil, ladled out by a fiendish monkey at an upstairs window" upon those pedestrians below against whom he has a grudge. The image, like most of Strachey's striking pronouncements, is a caricature of the truth. Pope is a monkey with an eighteenth-century periwig, and burning oil too barbarous a torture to describe the imperturb-

able, polite, and deadly annihilation of his glittering couplets. Though inwardly, no doubt, he is simmering with spleen, how magnificently in the suave dissection of "Sporus" does he simulate a contemptuous indolence! But in *The Dunciad*, it must be admitted, Pope does fall into the blunder of meanly deriding petty victims for mean motives, and when he does, all his virtuosity cannot save him. The most splendid cataract of invective fails if we believe its motives to be inadequate, false, or discreditable.

The suspicion of general misanthropy is no less fatal. We are swift to argue that he who sees no virtue in his fellow men must be poisoned with his own bile. When the great creative writers desire to portray such a character and still retain our sympathy for him, observe how diplomatically they go about it. Shakespeare's Timon of Athens must be princely in generosity, overflowing with universal benevolence, before financial ruin and the ingratitude of slavish sycophants lead him to curse mankind and end his life in a lonely cave by the ocean shore. Ibsen's Dr. Stockmann, in *An Enemy of the People*, is lavish with the hospitality of roast meats, hot toddy, and cigars; he is a devoted husband, a boyish companion to his sons, a public-spirited citizen delighting in the esteem of his fellow townsmen: only by slow stages is he brought to the position that society itself is founded upon corruption and that he is strongest who stands alone. It is revealing to see how Swift gradually transforms Gulliver from a prosaic, simple-minded, kindly sailor to a middle-class Timon who seeks refuge in the stable from the noisomeness of humanity.

When fiction and drama have to be as cautious as all this in merely portraying a man who ceases to be fond of his fellow men, it is clear that the satirist, especially the satirist who works with invective, must go to the greatest pains if he is to avoid being dismissed as a sullen hater of mankind A great aid to abusing people and getting away with it is high spirits. High spirits suggest that the satirist is not really serious, that it's all in fun, that his fury is only a comic fury, mere kidding among friends. Just as a grin and chuckle have saved many a man from being socked in the eye, so a rollicking manner often enables the satirist to attack us with denunciation piled on diatribe and still escape unharmed.

More important still, some of the abuse will always stick. It's a lot of fun when Byron takes pokes at the Lake Poets ("All the Lakers, in and out of place") as "a nest of tuneful persons" like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye." Southey, he goes on merrily, is an "Epic Renegade" who formerly "prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy' "; Wordsworth, who once "season'd his pedlar poems with democracy," now writes "drowsy, frowsy" philosophic "Excursions" of enormous length and stupefying dullness. The riotous attack comes to a climax with two of the funniest lines in all Byron:

We learn from Horace, "Homer sometimes sleeps";
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes.

Byron makes no endeavor to back up these strictures. He merely goes on gaily reiterating that Southey is "dry" and "mouthy" and that Wordsworth is crazed, long-winded, and dull. And yet it is doubtful that many of his readers have sampled any of Southey's "epics" or tackled *The Excursion* merely to check up on him. And how many readers know whether Shadwell deserved Dryden's mockery?

If to high spirits there be added the explosive of comedy or wit, the effect is still more potent. The air of doing scrupulous justice to Wordsworth, the tremendous backhanded compliment of admitting that he is not always asleep, creates such a hilarious idea that we *want* it to be true. To arouse our desires and then satisfy them by giving them what they have been led to want is thus an assured way of producing delight.

For satiric purposes, however, abuse has to be more than funny, it has to be damaging, and to be damaging it must strike us as really true. The sudden revelation of a damaging truth is what makes comedy wit. "Abuse is not so dangerous," Dr. Johnson says, "when there is no vehicle of wit or delicacy, no subtle conveyance. The difference between coarse and refined abuse is the difference between being bruised by a club and wounded by a poisoned dart." When Dorothy Parker, hearing that Coolidge was dead, asked, "How could they tell?" it was the dead-pan inexpressiveness of the living Coolidge that gave her query its wit and made of those four words a ferocious epitaph. The abuse is implied rather than stated, but our imaginations are equal to the task, they expand into the hollow presented to them with the violence of an explosion.

It is possible for such wit to impinge more and more upon the painful. In Charlie Chaplin's picture *Modern Times*, when the feeding machine into which Charlie is strapped goes insane and begins smashing the soup plate repeatedly in his face and violently scrubbing his mouth with the ear of corn like a dentist's revolving brush, the effect is both horrible and screamingly funny. And, still worse, "Last week," says Jonathan Swift, "I saw a woman flayed, and you would hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse." The impact of this appalling sentence lies in its aping a joke in materials too painful for jest.

But it is the wit in each that wrings the full degree of horror out of both Swift's picture of the flayed woman and Chaplin's satire on modern industrialism. "How efficiently benevolent is our capitalism," insinuates Chaplin, "in its care of the worker, using all the resources of technology to coddle him with the speedup and cram machine-kindness down his throat, literally choking him with good things." Swift's irony and Chaplin's slapstick shake

down to an uncompromising condemnation of human cruelty, hypocrisy, and selfishness; and it is their wit that gets them past our guard.

In this discussion of what enables the satirist to get away with abuse it may seem to the reader that we have contradicted ourselves. Strong feeling as an evidence of sincerity, high spirits as evidence that there is no malice, calm deliberation as evidence of mental balance, violence as evidence of conditions too intolerable to be borne: with such antithetical means of commending himself to his audience, the reader may ask, what can't the satirist get away with? The antitheses are real, but not the contradictions. For, of course, the inconsistency is in human nature itself, in readers, who are ready to cheer or snarl on occasion for very different reasons. Or, what is even more confusing, for the very same reasons.

Even so, these facts do not make the satirist's task an easy one. Criticism is still a highly ticklish job. The fact that there are ways of getting the reader to swallow it doesn't help very much, because his reaction is not certainly predictable. Belligerence may win his respect on one occasion and on another rouse him to violence. A loud joke may be met with screaming hilarity or resented as tactless and vulgar. Abuse will sometimes be greeted with shouts of approval, sometimes with angry growls. Our aids to abuse are not scientific and infallible; their effectiveness depends on time, place, and how they are used. The satirist who wants to engage in any direct name-calling still has to be on his toes.

Exaggeration is almost as instinctive to satire as smearing with bad names. Serious satire does not stop short with a little genial mockery. It is born of bitter earnest. Now, strong feeling distorts its objects. "Primitive emotion," as Lawrence Buermeyer puts it, "lives in a melodramatic world. Sheep and goats, friends and foes, are divided by an unbridgeable gulf. All bullies are cowardly, all libertines are heartless, and the sublime can never become the ridiculous." (Which is, of course, exactly why melodrama, seen unsympathetically, *does* merge into the ridiculous.) The melodramatic world is a world luridly colored and distorted by desire, all our loves more fair than life, everything we hate more black and dastardly.

Melodrama is consequently a familiar mood of violent emotional satire. Like invective, then, it sometimes twists the truth. It overlooks parts of the whole and magnifies other parts to startling proportions. It may therefore result either in serious falsifications or in a wild but illuminating chiaroscuro. Melodrama is honest; it does not mean to deceive. If it does deceive, it deceives itself in slashing passion. Its misrepresentations are innocent, its insights emotional and accidental. If we do not share its heat, every image may seem to us glaringly false, its pathos maudlin, its anger nothing but hysterical rant. Melodrama turns into burlesque with the slightest unfriendly

touch, so that just a tone of the voice or a little mugging can make *Bertha the Beautiful Sewing Machine Girl* into ridiculous farce. But melodrama may also, when it touches chords waiting to be struck in us or brings our emotions into accord with its operatic harmonies, seem instinct with truth. And such an emotional valuation need not be false. The omissions and exaggerations of melodrama can create shapes fantastic but more real than those of everyday fact. Such melodrama is fantasy with a core of wild justice.

The ease with which melodrama melts into burlesque, however, shows that they are related in essence. In a way, burlesque might be described as melodrama self-detected and tickled at itself. Unlike melodrama, it knows what it's up to. Instead of being angry, or only angry, it laughs. It does not confuse exaggeration with reality; it grins, "How like they are!" It laughs at the foolish core in a solemn thing suddenly focused into absurdity by its exaggeration; it laughs at the misty dividing line between sense and nonsense, so that a mere swelling or dwindling can make one a plausible image of the other. When burlesque inflates things to grotesqueness just for fun, it is one of the forms of humor: when it inflates them in order to deflate them it is satire.

It works a good deal like pictorial caricature. Max Beerbohm describes the caricaturist as studying his subject with intense concentration to discover which of its features express its essential weaknesses, and then rendering them by exaggerative distortions in the drawing. "Whatsoever is salient," he says, "must be magnified, whatsoever is subordinate must be proportionately diminished." Let us imagine that a man's meanness and sensuality reveal themselves in a small and evasive eye, a nose plump and porcine. Exaggerate both, then: make the eyes twice as tiny, ferretlike, and shifty, the nose a pulp of flesh to rut and smell out animal rankness. "You ask me, 'How about a subject who is neither handsome nor ugly?' In that case, merely, it is the lack of features that must be exaggerated." Caspar Milquetoast becomes our model, the wispy hair, the inconspicuous nose, the chin timorously retiring into the collar.

Such a technique, whether in word or picture, requires careful attention to its subject. Crude burlesque may exaggerate at random; skilled burlesque is impossible without understanding. And although a purely external and intellectual understanding can illumine a great deal, the deepest understanding involves sympathy of feeling. The best burlesque, in fact, is a blend of sympathy and critical laughter. It sympathizes because its understanding becomes almost a feeling of kinship; it seizes on the essential because its knowledge is too intimate for misunderstanding. Its playful exaggeration thus pierces the very heart of the absurdity.

This playfulness, forever present in either the manner or the spirit of

burlesque, should not blind us to the fact that burlesque may also be deeply serious in intention. Playfulness may be the voice of laughing anger or gay-spirited seriousness. Playfulness may be a strategy, a weapon, a disguise. Satiric playfulness may thus serve to discount the very exaggeration that was essential for throwing the highlight upon a vital flaw. So employed, burlesque is one of the most powerful weapons of satire.

It is so powerful that there are writers who have regarded it as identical with satire. "The essence of satire," writes G. K. Chesterton, "is that it perceives some absurdity inherent in the logic of some position, and that it draws the absurdity out and isolates it, so that all can see it. Thus, for instance, when Dickens says, 'Lord Coodle would go out; Sir Thomas Doodle wouldn't come in; and there being no people to speak of in England except Doodle and Coodle the country has been without a government'; when Dickens says this he suddenly pounces on and plucks out the one inherent absurdity in the English party system. . . . Dickens in substance asks, 'Suppose I want somebody else who is neither Coodle nor Doodle.' This is the great quality called satire, it is a kind of taunting reasonableness, and it is inseparable from a certain insane logic which is often called exaggeration." Chesterton is right in finding these qualities in satire, but he is wrong in trying to limit satire to burlesque alone. "True satire," he insists, "is always of this intellectual kind; true satire is always, so to speak, a variation or fantasia upon the air of pure logic." As we have seen, it is a great deal more than that.

Melodrama and burlesque are extreme polar opposites of exaggeration. Melodrama is unconscious of its distortions, burlesque twinklingly conscious. Melodrama is all emotion and sultry seriousness; burlesque full of light trickery, and sometimes flippant to the impoverishment of feeling. Melodrama is half a fool, whirled furiously in all directions by its heart, the gull of passion. Burlesque is never more tickled than in seeing quite clearly the whole ridiculous gulf between itself and the reality it reduces to absurdity.

Melodrama is a treacherous force in satire precisely because it seizes control of the satirist instead of being controlled by him. At some point his temperature rises, his heart pounds and his eyes flame, his brain fills with hot fog, and he no longer knows if we are with him or not. If we too have been seized, all well and good; but if not, the *satirist's* hold on us is broken. The earlier Dickens is full of animosity against melodramatic and villainous aristocrats whom we can't believe in. His humiliation over the meanness of his own childhood background filled him with a feverish resentment of aristocracy, even of good breeding, that made such a person as Lord Chesterfield to his distorted imagination a symbol of polished evil. Even his bur-

lesque fails to make convincing the nitwit Lord Frederick Verisopht, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, because we can sense the rancor behind the painted laugh. (Contrast the genial and affectionate authority with which P. G. Wodehouse renders nitwits like Bertie Wooster and the Honorable Freddie Threepwood.) And Dickens' melodrama in such circumstances is even worse: the polished Mr. Chester, of *Barnaby Rudge*, for example, who was modeled on Lord Chesterfield, and whose evident villainy resides in the fact that he does courteously the very things that the rough-diamond rural Mr. Haredale does boorishly.

But it would be a mistake to think melodrama invariably such a failure. Nowhere is it more powerfully exploited than in Dickens' handling of the great Chancery suit of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce, in *Bleak House*. There is the opening description of the fog raw and dense and leaden all over London: "And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery." There is the description of the wreckage of that Court's "decaying houses and its blighted lands in every shire"; "its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse, and its dead in every churchyard"; "its ruined suitor borrowing and begging through the round of every man's acquaintance"; the description of how it "gives to moneyed might the means abundantly of wearying out the right," exhausting "finances, patience, courage, hope," overthrowing the brain and breaking the heart.

There is the broken man from Shropshire "who can by no means be made to understand that the Chancellor is legally ignorant of his existence after making it desolate for a quarter of a century." There is poor mad little Miss Flite, who overhears Richard Carstone's whispered comment, and responds: " 'Right! Mad, young gentleman. I was a ward myself. I was not mad at that time,' curtseying low, and smiling between every little sentence. 'I had youth and hope. I believe, beauty. It matters very little now. Neither of the three served, or saved me.' " There is something very dreadful about this pathetic little figure, curtseying and smiling, and saying, "Youth. And hope. And beauty. And Chancery."

From beginning to end the melodrama of this legal satire is masterly. It creates at the very start an atmosphere charged with emotion, and never ceases to work within that atmosphere. Even had it not done so, the eerie derangement of Miss Flite, the violent and impotent anger of the man from Shropshire, the slow disintegration of Richard Carstone, are symbols too overwhelming to be fought. They sweep away all qualification, they drown criticism by sheer power and passion. In all their fantastic outlines they are too real to be resisted.

The American scenes of *Martin Chuzzlewit* illustrate Dickens' brilliance

in burlesque. Colonel Diver, Mr. Jefferson Brick, Mr. LaFayette Kettle, each "one of the most remarkable men in our country, sir," Zephaniah Scadder, General Fladdock and the genteel Norris family, Mrs. Hominy "talking deep truths in a melodious snuffle," Hannibal Chollop, "a splendid specimen of our na-tive raw material, sir," the Watertoast Association of United Sympathizers—all these are the gorgeous freaks of a glorified circus. But they add up to a devastating onslaught upon the America of the 1840's, cartooning in the loudest colors American boastfulness and bad manners, intolerance and illiterate greed.

It is burlesque that makes no attempt to get inside its victim We never have the faintest notion of how Major Pawkins and the Honorable Elijah Pogram must look to themselves. And yet the distortions are vehicles of truth. If Americans howled and winced at the time, it was because Dickens hit home. Even today will readers find nothing familiar in the *New York Rowdy Journal*, no echoes in the *New York Keyhole Reporter*? Or will the Eden Land Corporation seem scandalously overdrawn to those who bought Florida lots half under water? Nor is the talk of the businessmen and politicians in Dickens significantly different from the talk Sinclair Lewis reports in *Babbitt*. "Whatever the chance contributions that fell into the slow cauldron of their talk," Dickens summarizes it, "they made the gruel thick and slab with dollars. Men were weighed by their dollars, measures gauged by their dollars; life was auctioneered, appraised, put up, and knocked down for its dollars. . . . Make commerce one huge lie and mighty theft. . . . Do anything for dollars!"

If the reader feels British prejudice in these passages, he should note Dickens' frank avowal that similar ones might be found in an English comedy without "any gross improbability." They are made more ridiculous, though, as Dickens rightly says, by all the high-flown American professions of republican virtue and freeborn integrity. Even so, the Eden Land Corporation is hardly a slicker or more disreputable swindle than the Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company, or a Zephaniah Scadder worse than a Tigg Montague. And the backwoods bullies and blustering American patriots, with their "Ticklers," "Rippers," revolvers, and bowie knives, do not come up to the brutal and cowardly Jonas Chuzzlewit poisoning his father's cough medicine and leaving his bloodstained cudgel in the gloomy wood. What Dickens satirized in America was fair game. He reserved his fiercest blows for evils at home.

I have used Dickens rather extensively to illustrate both melodrama and burlesque because he is the most striking example of their powers and their limitations. His melodrama fails when through prejudice or bad judgment it palpably falsifies the real nature of his subjects. His burlesque fails when

we can sense the animosity beneath the pretended grin. But his melodrama is triumphant when it works in an atmosphere charged with emotion, and his burlesque when it is carried off by energy, high spirits, and hilarity. And both capture us by storm when through the fantasy of details they remain true to the essence of the object they portray.

It may be desirable to add a note on two special forms of burlesque, travesty and parody. Both are a kind of literary caricature. But parody, allowing itself much range in subject matter, burlesques the style of its original; travesty retains the original subject matter and throws the style overboard. Quiller-Couch travesties Hamlet's soliloquy when he writes: "To be, or the contrary? Whether the former or the latter be preferable would seem to admit of some difference of opinion; the answer in the present case being of an affirmative or of a negative character according as to whether one elects on the one hand to mentally suffer the disfavor of fortune . . . or on the other to boldly envisage adverse conditions in the prospect of eventually bringing them to a conclusion."

Laforgue's witty travesty of *Hamlet*, in his *Moralités légendaires*, shows the melancholy Prince being pursued by a relentlessly faithful Ophelia fastening on her prey with such pertinacity that he exclaims in despair: "Stability, thy name is woman!" The inner play, an original drama by Hamlet himself, achieves its aim with unexpected speed: King Claudius, a critic of taste, expires in literary anguish. These are comic inventions, but irrelevant to the merits or shortcomings of *Hamlet*.

Parody, on the other hand, when it fixes upon the significant in style, transfixes the essence; "the style *is* the man." Max Beerbohm's *A Christmas Garland* is a masterpiece of parody because it so delicately exaggerates the eccentricities of its victim's styles, and does so with so much love and understanding in the midst of its gaiety that we find ourselves seeing not only their defects but their merits more clearly. Take a single sentence from his imitation of Henry James: "It was with a sense of a, for him, very memorable something that he peered into the immediate future, and tried, not without compunction, to take that period up where he had, prospectively, dropped it." Could anything more neatly underline James's fussily meticulous placing of modifiers and his old-maidish precision of punctuation? Or take this, from the imitation of George Moore: "There are moments when one does not think of girls, are there not, dear reader?" and savor for a moment the richness of that word "moments." Or, finally, remembering Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson and all the other clever dowagers who word their way through Meredith's novels flashing gnomic aphorisms, take this comment on the six-foot heroine of *Euphemia Clashthought*: " 'Nymph in

the Heavy Dragoons' was Mrs. Cryptic-Sparkler's famous definition of her."

Beerbohm crystallizes our perception that burlesque attains the heights of its achievement when love and criticism go hand in hand. If the love swamps criticism, satire drowns too. But if hate slays understanding it also slays truth. And the very essence of successful exaggeration is that its exaggerations are significant and true. That is what makes it a weapon for satire.

By all the means we have now glanced at, the direct satirist overrides censorship, and makes himself a licensed teller of unpleasant truths. Sometimes truth alone seems his sufficient sword and shield. But sometimes even truth hardly seems to explain how he goes uninjured, and he becomes like a disagreeable great-uncle whose acid criticisms we wonder why we put up with. Usually, however, there can be discovered even in the bluntest satire some quality of disguised ingratiation that persuades us to hear its strictures. A calculated harshness, as we have seen, is the ingratiatory device of the invective satirist. "I am a plain man," he says truculently; "you must take me as I am; I cannot flatter, or butter you with smooth words; I say only what I see, without fear or favor." This is the strategy of Juvenal.

Disguising the satire as mere entertaining fiction is another strategy. Just like Al Jolson, whose rain wasn't raining rain at all, but raining violets, Swift in *Gulliver* or Wells in *The First Men in the Moon* purports to rain no damping criticism of human evils but only a refreshing story of wild adventure. Babbitt is Sinclair Lewis' portrait of the American businessman, but no individual is George F. Babbitt. If we feel the lash, and squirm, we still cannot cry falsehood; there would be no sting had not the stroke gone home. Such devices enable the most direct onslaught to assume certain protective ambiguities.

Exaggeration attains the same ends by seeming partly irresponsible. Melodramatic exaggeration is the mark of a man beside himself with emotion, "possessed" by fury, no longer himself. We sane folk do not resent hysteria or insanity. But at the same time the Fool or Lear may speak truth in his raving. His affliction disarms our resentment and forces us to believe in his sincerity: the "natural" is too simple to deceive, the madman too self-absorbed to be thinking of the impression he makes on us. That is why the satirist often indulges in various grotesque and violent eccentricities, strange mannerisms that label him as "innocent" or man possessed. His pretended affliction licenses him to speak the most pertinent impertinences.

The personality of Samuel Johnson is a good example of such a privileged status. Here we have the great scholar and learned doctor whose intellectual eminence and grandeur of spirit are at the same time fantasti-

cally at odds with his strange exterior. Puffing, perspiring, slovenly of stocking and dusty of wig, he is a Christian sage with the manners and physique of a performing bear: at once comic, alarming, august, and profound. What wonder if he made for himself at last a privileged position, became for many of his victims a kind of Sacred Lunatic, not to be taken seriously and at the same time commanding the deepest awe?

As Fool or Madman, the satirist melts into Jester, and thereby brings us to burlesque. Silliness and mania are transformed into playfulness. The jest becomes the excuse under cover of which the serious work of satire is done. The irresponsible manner of jesters like Frank Sullivan and James Thurber persuades the scatterbrained to accept satire on empty-headedness, snobs to enjoy deflations of snobbery, and women to tolerate withering attacks on women, all under the pretense that it is humorous nonsense. But crazy satire may have darker causes than either strategy or exuberance. "When a humorist feels deep down inside him," says Donald Ogden Stewart, "that there is no outlet to his life, that he is surrounded by blind alleys, then his humor becomes mad, fantastic; then in his utter despair he creates illogical dream worlds and the sound of his crazy laughter echoes in the empty house."

So much, then, by way of a brief backward glance, for the ways in which direct satire overcomes the Censor. But indirect satire, as we have said, eludes censorship instead of battling it. The opposition that must be beaten down in direct attack it sidesteps by a pretended innocence. It assumes the robes of a disinterested arbiter judiciously weighing the pros and cons. It disguises itself as a friendly onlooker, cries out encouragements, even seizes weapons and offers itself as an ally. Defenses that would never yield to direct attack are thus subtly undermined, destroyed from within, and imperceptibly crumbled away.

Irony is one of the most powerful devices of indirect satire. It is a kind of dissimulation, and the ironist a dissembler. "Mr. Thomas Heartfree," writes Fielding in *Jonathan Wild*, had "several great weaknesses of mind, being good-natured, friendly, and generous to a great excess," and "was withal so silly a fellow that he never took the least advantage of the ignorance of his customers." Throughout the whole book Fielding never ceases to speak contemptuously of Heartfree's "low and pitiful behavior" in yielding to tender emotions or governing his conduct by unselfish standards of morality.

The method of dissembling here used, as in all irony, is that of consistent understatement. Although it can be used with the utmost subtlety, irony is in essence a very simple quantitative device, like exaggeration. It is, in fact, merely a kind of inside-out twin of exaggeration. "The law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to steal apples from pushcarts

and sleep under bridges." Is this an *exaggeration* of the degree to which justice is embodied in the law or an *understatement* of how hard justice is to obtain for the poor? The same words simultaneously embody both, and involve both irony and exaggeration.

This is not to say that there is no difference between Anatole France's subtle tactics here and the bitter hyperbole of Dickens' attack on the Courts of Chancery. The distinction lies in *what* is exaggerated and what understated. Just to make it helpfully confusing, let me put it this way: exaggeration understates what we don't mean and overstates what we do mean. Irony overstates what we don't mean and carefully understates what we do mean. From this is derived the popular conception of irony as confined to saying the opposite of what we mean. For if we keep on saying less and less of what we really mean, it follows that we are also saying more and more of what we don't mean, until at last the intensification of understatement results in inversion. "A fine friend *you* are," is the final goal of understating the betrayal of friendship, as "this great statesman" may imply a bitter judgment of mediocrity and "a model husband" clearly mean a lecher.

But crude ironies like these slap you in the face. They are hardly distinguishable from the brutalities of invective or the ragings of melodrama. They are born of violent anger, and mirror it. They aren't very much fun because they give away their animus too easily. Unless we can be brought to share their anger, we may dismiss them altogether. That is why the impish grin of burlesque is more contagious. W. S. Gilbert has the Lord Chancellor sing in *Iolanthe*:

> The Law is the true embodiment
> Of everything that's excellent;
> It has no kind of fault or flaw,
> And I, My Lords, embody the Law.

We can't imagine any Lord Chancellor saying this, but we can imagine him secretly thinking it.

The same puncturing of a professionable façade that Gilbert achieves by exaggeration, France's sly epigram on the law achieves by cool understatement. It is so quiet, so reasonable in manner, so laudatory in tone, that we could even imagine some heavy-witted defender of jurisprudence falling into France's trap and taking his ironical praises literally. Irony is thus much more really a kind of "double talk" than the gibberish going under that name in recent years. It is meaningful in two ways, on two levels of perception. It presupposes, as H. W. Fowler puts it, the outsiders who "hearing shall hear and not understand," and the happy few who "when more is meant than meets the ear" are "aware both of that and of the outsiders' incomprehension."

Sometimes the outsiders would have to be pretty dull or callous not to understand. Butler writes with cutting sarcasm:

> What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
> About two hundred pounds a year.
> And that which was proved true before
> Proved false again? Two hundred more.

Lots of men, no doubt, live by these principles, but most of them would be too cautious to avow their cynicism; it is only dialectically that the fox is caught out in the open. It is possible, on the other hand, for the ironist to cut things too fine. The distance between Defoe's ironical suggestions in his *Shortest Way with Dissenters* and what the more ferocious persecutors really felt was so slight that Church of England fanatics welcomed a brutal lead and dissenters were horrified at an even more savage voice joining the rest of the pack. The uncovering of his hoax alienated both sides.

Defoe had merely carried injudiciously far an important characteristic of all successful irony: the pretense of innocence. France's *Penguin Island* rings a hundred variations on the device of having the action observed and commented on by some simple-minded innocent, a pure fool, bruised and bewildered by the world, whose naive goodness is forever being baffled by the viciousness and cruelty of men. As the Holy Mael he sadly observes that since the penguins "became men they behave with less wisdom than before." As the chaste monk Oddoul, who has refused the advances of Queen Glamorgan, he is rewarded by having an angel empty a chamberpot on his head. As the learned Dr. Obnubile he is flabbergasted to discover that industrial republics also wage wars. And while the villainies of the world continue without end, the pure in heart stand by helpless, or when they endeavor to act see their efforts ludicrously miscarry.

By such an appearance of innocence the ironist gives the impression that satire was far from his intention. Any unveiling he has achieved seems less of his engineering than inherent in the circumstances themselves. The facts seem their own satire. This is much more persuasive than if the satirist appears to be calling our responses for us. We have the pleasure, invisibly aided by the satirist's hand, of detecting the prey and bringing it down ourselves. If the satirist manages to seem very naive, we may flatter ourselves that we have seen through deceptions by which he appears to have been taken in. And when we no longer subscribe to this delusion we are not apt to be enraged, for we have now penetrated the ingenious trickery of a very clever fellow. The cleverer he was to have almost fooled even us for so long, the cleverer we are in having been able to join his sport. The whole process of understood irony is a delightful massage to our vanity.

Irony has corresponding disadvantages. When it is not perceived it may

seem to its readers and victims merely to be stating what for them is a truism, and all its wire-drawn treacheries leave them unaware that they have been betrayed. It is like that *New Yorker* cartoon in which the duellist cries, "Touché!" having whipped his sword through his opponent's neck with such speed that the other does not know his head is severed from his body. Sometimes, however, the existence of irony *is* smelled without being understood. The response is apt to be a baffled resentment, bewilderment mingling with the feeling that the satirist is a wise guy. But when his irony *is not* understood at all, and *then* gets explained, let the satirist beware. That was what landed Defoe in the pillory.

Socrates was an adept at playing the game of irony. By a profession of ignorance, by understating the degree of his knowledge to the point where he professed to know almost nothing, Socrates lured the pretentious and conceited to their destruction. For those who knew their Socrates, the fun lay in a game whereby the man who admitted that he knew all the answers would be turned inside out by the mere simpleton. This is closely akin to dramatic irony. In comedy, the victims of dramatic irony remain complacently unaware of how ludicrous a figure they cut in the eyes of others, they underestimate their own absurdities to the degree of pluming themselves upon their very weaknesses. In tragedy, they underestimate their peril by overlooking or misreading as favorable some aspect of their circumstances which we perceive to be ominous.

This kind of irony merges into the irony of fate, which is not a mere cliché for the strange or unexpected. The irony of fate confronts us when in the very event that seems to gratify our dearest wish there is hidden a crushing disaster. Saying little at the moment, it has already made itself part of the irrevocable past before its reticent hints have been understood. Things or events have played an ironic joke on us, sometimes a bitterly painful one, by understating their meaning to us until it was too late. Oedipus obstinately and hot-temperedly determined on pursuing the investigation from which both Tiresias and Jocasta try to deflect him is an example of dramatic irony, and what should be the triumphant solution of his detective problem—the discovery that, unknown to himself, *he* has been the criminal, the polluter of the city, the unconscious murderer of his unknown father and the incestuous husband of his mother—all this crushing impact of revelation—is the hideous irony of fate.

Irony, then, has larger bounds than are contained within a biting epigram or the stab of a sarcasm. The larger ironies are cosmic; they are entwined in human fate. It is these that are more significant to satire than any mere verbal technique of slippery insinuation. They may inspire the insights that shape a satirist's entire design. In their depths may lurk the springs of his

philosophy. The method of *Candide* is a ferociously hilarious mockery, but its strength lies in Voltaire's ironic perception of men's blindness to the cruelties among which they pass their lives and their indifference to the sufferings of others. The method of *Penguin Island* is parody, but its core is an ironic deflation of history and of the golden vision of progress. Irony has been the animating spirit of the skeptical philosophers among satirists. In their hands it has been not merely a device for shaping words into swords. It has poured the air and sunlight of reason into dark places and disinfected them of the superstitions that germinated there.

Prudence is one of the parents of irony. But irony is not its only child; it has another, whose name is allegory. Whereas irony walks softly, however, saying less than it means in an innocent voice, and leaving its weapons well hidden while it courteously invites you to your destruction, allegory disguises itself altogether. It is masquerade or camouflage. It guards itself not by insinuating mildness but by standing in the full glare of light and pretending to be something else. In satire, it is the machine-gun nest disguised as the trunk of a dead tree. In its verbal technique, instead of being limited, like irony, to the various degrees of understatement, it is endlessly flexible. It may make any image whatsoever the symbol for another idea, deriving from the relationship innumerable advantages of association. Allegory is in fact a special form of symbolism, and in its use of symbolism lies its strength.

In a broad sense, of course, all thought is carried on by means of symbols. Words and signs are not in themselves the things they stand for. Nor do they embody in any occult way the qualities of those things. The word "dog" carries with it no rich suggestion of intrinsic doggishness. Even words that, as we say, "sound like" the things they label probably depend as much upon habitual consent as they do upon any real resemblance. The buzzing of bees which for us is so murmurously present in those two z's, a Frenchman hears quite as convincingly in a *bourdonnement* of *abeilles*, in both of which words there is not one audible z sound. It is only with a willing fancy that we feel a luxurious velvetiness about the very sound of the word "velvet." The relations between words and the ideas they stand for are almost entirely arbitrary, and the words are only symbols of the things signified.

This is not, however, what is meant by literary symbolism. Arbitrary symbols have *no* meanings other than those conventionally assigned to them. Literary symbolism has *more* than one single meaning. Sometimes there is one surface meaning and a more significant underlying one. Sometimes a host of associated meanings intermingle with and color one another. In consequence of this weighting with suggestion, the reader comes to

recognize that the surface meaning is not the real one. No one remembers, probably, how early he knew that "barking dogs never bite" is not a safe guide to the behavior of dogs.

A witty cartoonist in the now-defunct comic magazine *Life* devoted a whole series of sketches to commenting on our tendency to leap upon the real meaning of proverbs without becoming fully conscious of the symbol. He depicted the investigations of a group called the Skeptics' Society into the validity of various proverbs. In one, the Skeptics wait, with patience and soup plates, while a whole Gallic profusion of chefs wrangle volubly over a simmering caldron of broth. In another, the Skeptics eavesdrop behind clumps of shrubbery to see if two lovers on a park bench will laugh when a locksmith pops out of the bushes. The ludicrous pleasure of such pictures lies partly in our surprise that we have never thought to visualize them.

Symbolic statements like these proverbs give us in miniature the same process that allegory elaborates to greater complication Animal fables and parable are intermediate forms, although the distinctions between them and allegory are a little vague and lie in practice rather than in theory. Animal fables, like those of Aesop and La Fontaine, tend to be brief as well as simple in plot. In the beast epic, *Reynard the Fox,* however, the story becomes a satiric commentary on all of human life, with the animals as derisive caricatures of representative types of character. Parables tend, like those of Jesus, to be entirely plausible, even on the literal level. But they may expand into such an allegory as *The Pilgrim's Progress,* where the story sometimes wears so thin as to leave only the bare moral. Essentially allegory is only an enlarged version of these simpler forms, a tremendously enriched symbolic image. The whole of Swift's *Voyage to Lilliput* is nothing but a translation into imagery, illustrated from a thousand angles, of the pettiness of man.

Symbolism is not, of course, peculiar to satire. Plato's myth of the cave uses symbolism for metaphysical analysis, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* uses it for lyric prophecy, Blake's "Tyger! tyger! burning bright" for awe-inspiring paradox. The rich interplay of its emotional overtones in these may suggest its varied powers. One of its special values for satire is that it may enable the satirist to evade the dangers of saying what he means outright. *The Beggar's Opera* is something considerably more subtle than merely an attack on the eighteenth-century Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole; but it symbolizes Walpole as the highwayman Macheath, and its victim felt obliged to let himself be seen in the theater laughing heartily at its jibes to show the world that it left him unhurt. But his censorship refused a license to its successor, *Polly.*

Until censorship catches up with it, symbolism offers the satirist a way of saying what he means despite all the bureaucratic devices of the dictatorships. Thomas Mann's *Mario and the Magician*, written in Mussolini's Italy in 1929, when Germany was already drifting toward fascism, "strongly suggests," writes Harry Slochower, "the spirit of black and somber dictatorship that holds its power by trickery, bluff, and demagogy." Its violent denouement, the shooting of the magician Cipolla by one of the peasants he has hypnotized, is both a warning and a prophecy. Except in its allegorical disguise, it would have been impossible to imagine its being published in either Italy or Germany.

The racial, national, and political theologies of today have brought with them, in the form of Gestapos, castor oil, concentration camps, and torture, a resurgence of Inquisitorial violence hardly less barbarous than the dungeons of Toledo. Unless it would have its tongue torn out, criticism in the fascist state must turn to allegory. Even in the democratic states, sneers, malice, petty persecutions, social ostracism, threats to financial security, may be the reward of the critic who speaks certain kinds of truths too bluntly. In the nineteenth century we find Ibsen engineering his attacks by devices of highly organized symbolic metaphors. Wives who exist only to amuse their husbands are dancing toys dwelling in *doll's houses;* if you say that the underlying idea is immoral and should not be openly discussed, he replies with an image of concealed and buried evils rising again like *ghosts.* If you now shriek that the subject is noisome, he grimly embraces the accusation by asking if a doctor should not speak out when subterranean pollution is everywhere leaking through the drains, and demanding to know who are the *enemies of the people* that seek to conceal the sources of corruption.

But symbolism has for satire more than the practical merit of helping in the avoidance of persecution. It shares with irony the advantage that its criticisms are hard to refute or deny. For they are sustained not by direct assertion, but by whatever awareness we have of the justice inherent in their implications. If Swift makes his Struldbrugs hideous to contemplate and his Yahoos shocking to our self-esteem, it is we who have referred their characteristics to humanity. What makes them rankle even as we strive to deny them is our own painful sense of the things they symbolize in mankind. All the furious outcry against Swift's misanthropy and all the endeavor to find in these terrible images only the evidence of a mind unhinged prove but the more conclusively how dreadfully they strike home.

The strength of such symbols lies furthermore in their ability to exploit the associations they carry with them and transfer those associations to the thing symbolized. The Yahoos are bad-tempered and malicious, and they are also cretinously stupid; they are revolting in appearance and nasty

in their habits, and at the same time they are grotesque, clownish, almost ludicrous, with their squealing and clawing, their slapstick use of evacuation as a weapon, and their embarrassing amorousness. They fuse together what would otherwise be very divided emotions: a comic loathing, a savage-hateful-mocking-and-tortured laughter. And the Yahoos infect with their own filth and disgustingness the humanity we understand them to mean.

Symbolic language is thus constantly bringing its emotional overtones into our responses to the materials on which it is used. When Goldsmith, talking one day about how hard it was to write animal fables, said that the difficulty was to make animals talk like animals, he noticed Johnson shaking his sides. "Why, Dr. Johnson," he cried, "this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make the little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES." How magically Goldsmith's jibe transforms Johnson's ungainly bulk into the hugeness of the clumsy cetaceous monster, and his orotund vocabulary into the whale's spouting and wallowing heaviness!

Even in such miniature forms as Goldsmith's whale, symbolism clearly draws upon a concentrated richness of association. As symbolic structures grow more complicated, they may weave web upon web entwined in subtle connection. A single figure of foolish pathos, like the White Knight in *Through the Looking-Glass*, can suggest all the melancholy and moonstruck idealism that ever was, and a chessboard can expand to take in the edges of the world. *Heartbreak House*, built in the form of a ship, like England riding the waves, with its drunken and enfeebled master and its crew of idle and luxurious parasites, can evoke an atmosphere of tragic foreboding, as if we beheld the sinking curve of a once splendid trajectory against the sky. Cervantes can deflate both an idealism floating dizzily in the void and a vulgar materialism insensible of ideals, and do so with a tender irony that makes Don Quixote and Sancho Panza two profound and immortal symbols.

Don Quixote is a revelation of how little the loftier reaches of satire are dependent upon comedy. The crude practical jokes by which the Don is victimized come gradually to seem painful, not funny, and before the end are dropped altogether. We still see clearly enough that he is a lost incompetent in the everyday world, but his very delusions, we begin to realize, grow out of a certain spiritual innocence that gives him the entry into a no less real world of aspiration and beauty and grandeur. Laughter would be out of key with this supreme wisdom

But laughter ripples through so much lighter satire, or hoots with hostile derision in so many other of its modes, that it is easy to see how plausible people have found the identification of satire with humor. With wit, indeed, it has many affinities, and with humor a frequent working partnership. I do

not intend here to involve the reader in one of those long and solemn and humorless discussions of what makes things comic. It isn't *things* that make us laugh, it's our own lightness or gaiety of heart. Anything, the merest trifles, can provoke giggles when our mood is playful. Children can squeal and fall down on the floor in paroxysms of mirth at a loud snort or a grimace. If grownups don't run around making funny faces and laughing their heads off, it's because they have forgotten how to play. They insist on having "something to laugh at." So the philosophers oblige them with theories of laughter. And wits and humorists help out, maybe a bit more effectively, with "comic" stories and ideas.

We must still insist, however, that there is no such thing as the absolutely laughable. There are people with "no sense of humor" who will never crack a grin at Harpo Marx's ethereally and preternaturally innocent look of being somewhere else entirely while stray knives, forks, and spoons trickle out of his coat sleeves and trouser legs, and ultimately rain in jangling cascades on the floor; just as there are sobersides who feel no sympathetic joy in the zany and Dionysian glee with which he lurches out of a coma to leap on some passing cutie. And nearly all of us lose the capacity for laughter when we are having fits of gloom or have been saddened by defeat or bereavement. Few have the flexibility of George Bernard Shaw, who became convinced at his mother's cremation that her spirit was enjoying the absurdity of white-capped men looking like cooks picking over the remains and separating wood ash from authentic remnants of the lady; the scandalized Granville-Barker commented, "You certainly are a merry soul, Shaw."

Humor remains closer to the childhood mood of hilarity than wit does. Humor may be sheer playful nonsense. It is indifferent to whether its fun is anchored in reality or adrift in fantasy. It is highhearted and cockeyed; if it has any meaning at all the truth or the importance of that meaning is the last reason humor would have for its happiness. Humor may have truth, but it's just as willing to deal in fancy. It isn't analyzing reality, it isn't criticizing, it's just enjoying its own effervescence. When it happens to hit at something, as it sometimes does, the blow is only an accident, and wasn't intended to hurt.

But wit has its eye glued on reality. It distinguishes, it makes invidious comparisons. Unlike humor, which is as sympathetic as a friendly puppy, wit never merges with its objects. It stands off at a distance, it raises frigid eyebrows, it touches only with ten-foot poles, or if it comes closer does so scalpel in hand. Part if not all the world wit rejects into outer darkness, regarding it with alienation, even hostility. Wit strips away flattering disguises and checks the poor naked anatomy that remains by standards that would leave the judges of an Atlantic City beauty contest looking sentimental and

undiscriminating. Even when it is turned upon some aspect of itself wit is as clinical as a doctor analyzing his own heart disease. Its theme is always reality; its standards are truth and sanity.

"Our prejudices," writes Chesterfield, "are our mistresses, reason is at best our wife, very often heard, indeed, but seldom minded." It is the justice of its analysis that makes this observation witty. Witty compliments have the same virtue. Swift pretends to be mightily indignant at a lady who has sent him some butter churned with her own hands, she is trying to bribe his good opinion, but in revenge he will tell all the ladies he knows that she understands housekeeping, "and this will give you as ill a reputation as if you had been caught in the act of reading a history, or handling a needle" Observe how Swift's very praise is engineered by a backhanded slap at the illiteracy and uselessness of fine ladies.

In contrast to these, let us note how absurd it would be to say that our enjoyment of Harpo embarrassed by the falling silver is colored by sentiments about knaves caught redhanded, or reflections on the vanity of transparent deception, or disapproval of making free with your neighbors' silverware, or moral rejoicings at the criminal being caught. Even as that pile of cutlery grows incredibly high we feel no hostility to Harpo and we are unconcerned with the plausibility of the situation. We are *with* him in his discomfort, not against him. On the other hand, the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle entertaining Alice with sparse recollections of their Classics master but *detailed accounts of the Lobster Quadrille is more enjoyable if we see Lewis Carroll's sly insinuation that Old Grads sometimes recall far less of the academic lore they studied than they do of games and parties.*

Wit, then, is a true instrument of satire, but humor only a bait and lure. Humor *entices us into the satirist's net, perhaps,* it does not truss us up until he has us tied as tightly in his clutches as Gulliver bound down by the thousand tiny threads of the Lilliputians. Humor is like the cookies and candies on the gingerbread hut that enable the Witch to get Hansel and Gretel in her wattled cage to fatten them for dinner. And when the satirist gets us in his clutches, he will plump up our vanities, pretenses, absurdities, and falsehoods to serve back to us at the feast of reason. That is the function of wit in satire.

Wit is not necessarily amusing. Serious wit may be only a powerful searchlight thrown upon reality. It dispels illusion, startles our preconceptions, and still compels assent. This was the eighteenth-century definition of wit, which has nothing in common with the deep-bellied laughter that gasps itself to tears until it collapses helpless in its own *ruins* Wit makes no such surrender to the emotions; it hales *everything before* the high court of reason. Mockery *is merely one of its possible verdicts* The *facts may* call

for severer judgment. Wit is capable of protean transformations. The feather that tickles us may write our condemnation; the pen turn to a sword. So the wit of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists helped to write the death warrant of the old regime in France. But a new age executed the verdict.

III. Why Satire Is Important

An age of change is always one of intellectual ferment. In stable times, men take things for granted. Whatever principles or rules of thumb served their fathers, they are apt to assume, will serve them equally well. If tragedy or disaster follow, it is easy to believe that these grew out of weaknesses in the individual rather than deficiencies in society or men's ways of thinking. But in periods of widespread change things are subjected to a critical overhauling. Altering social institutions and conventional beliefs leads to criticism, and criticism begets satire. That is why the great periods of historical change have always been marked by a flowering of satire.

Periclean Athens had the delicate mockery of Plato and the satiric genius of Aristophanes, together with a cluster of comic writers whose works are now lost. The Rome of Augustus had the urbane wit of Horace, the seething Empire of the second century Juvenal, Martial, and Lucian. Awakening Europe of the late Middle Ages had Boccaccio, Chaucer, and a host of anonymous satirists in ballad, allegory, fable, and morality play. With the Renaissance and the growth of national states come the great voices of Rabelais, Aretino, Cervantes, and all the wit and satire of Elizabethan drama. Modern European history has been accompanied by an almost steadily increasing chorus of satiric voices: Molière, Dryden, and the glitter of Restoration comedy in the seventeenth century; Pope, Swift, Fielding, Voltaire, in the eighteenth; and since the French Revolution a roaring torrent that has been heard in almost every land.

The growth of commerce altered the face of the seventeenth-century world; the industrial revolution brought with it the changes of technology, democracy, and international competition for markets. England in the nineteenth century became rich with satire inspired by these phenomena. Byron mocked his fellow poets, the eternal absurdities of men, and the vices of upper-class society impartially. Thomas Love Peacock took potshots at industrialism and "the march of mind"; Thackeray at the materialism, snobbery, and vulgarity of nobles, middle-class merchants, and Indian nabobs. Dickens assaulted violently the cruelties and horrors of the workhouse,

foundling asylums, courts of law, debtors' prisons, governmental red tape, the factory system and exploitation of the poor; Samuel Butler—but the list grows too numerous to mention in detail. And meanwhile other countries are contributing Leopardi, Balzac, Flaubert, Ibsen, Mark Twain, Chekhov, Heine, Gogol, Anatole France, Marcel Proust.

Nor does the flood show any signs of dwindling. The twentieth century in England and America has already produced H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw (most of their work has been accomplished in the present century), Norman Douglas, Max Beerbohm, Thorstein Veblen, Ring Lardner, James Joyce, Sinclair Lewis, and Aldous Huxley. But in addition to that it is hardly possible to name more than a few outstanding novelists in whose work, even when it is not primarily satiric, there is not a strong current of satire. Wipe out the satire from John Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, James T. Farrell, John Dos Passos, and Thomas Wolfe, and you have erased some of their most brilliant pages. Our comic writers—Donald Ogden Stewart, James Thurber, Roy Campbell, Frank Sullivan, A. P. Herbert, Robert Benchley, to name only a few—are more than two-thirds satirists. Our leading radio and motion-picture comedians—Charlie Chaplin, Fred Allen, Groucho Marx—are all satirists. Even biography has been tinged with satire, in the mordant productions of Lytton Strachey and the flashier efforts of the debunkers. Satire is an active yeast in modern poetry, from the fastidious uncertainties of T. S. Eliot's *Prufrock* to Ogden Nash's lighthearted verbal gymnastics.

This enormous growth of satire during modern times is to some degree reflected in the proportions of the present volume. We have a score of selections from classical satire; then, after the long interval of the Dark Ages, four from medieval satire, from the sixteenth century six; from the seventeenth century eighteen; and from that to the present a constantly increasing number. I do not mean to imply, of course, that these figures correspond absolutely to the bulk of the materials Doubtless much medieval satire has been lost, as countless writings of antiquity have been. And very considerable amounts of medieval satire I have not tried to draw upon because time has dulled its interest for most readers today. Idiosyncrasy of judgment and pure ignorance have probably occasioned various omissions that many people will be willing to point out to me. It is possible that I may have given recent satire more than its due share of attention, some writers who seem important or amusing to us may well prove less appealing to the future. But even so, it is significant that the most rigorous exclusions leave us no fewer than a dozen eighteenth-century satirists compelling our admiration, no fewer from the nineteenth century, and that in the less than half of the twentieth century we have passed through there should be at least a score.

And only limitations of space prevent this book from being many times its present size.

One thing then is clear: the satiric note is a characteristic strain in the babel of the modern world. As the pace of our lives has accelerated, as science has made the bare description of our universe more complicated, and modern industry diversified the structure of society and sharpened the conflicts of its economic interests, there has taken place a no less desperate struggle of minds. It still continues and, since the pace of change is not in any way slackening, seems destined to continue. Traditional ways of acting and believing lie around us in all degrees of repair, usefulness, and obstructiveness. New developments have shot up among them, some clearly conceived and good, others incredibly makeshift or destructive. Satire calls attention to these confusions and sharpens the need for clarifying them.

It is no easy job to tidy up our intellectual and spiritual universe. But to live in chaos is to accept defeat. We all want order in our lives and meaning in our world. Nature plays cruel and bitter jokes on us. We inflict stupid and brutal miseries on each other. We make wild blunders, but, as Thornton Wilder points out, we come through "by the skin of our teeth." We clear away the wreckage of blitzed cities, we reclaim the dust bowl and control floods, we try to imagine and then create love and justice. To do so we have to hew a path through the absurdities and empty-headed mouthings of conventional formulas, through old and new fanaticisms, through muddle and deliberate misrepresentation, through needless cruelty and suffering.

Satire can help at these tasks because people will let satire say things they will not permit to the outright preacher or philosopher or social reformer. Not that they want to let the satirist say such things, or always know that they are letting him, but that in the various ways we have seen he gets around them. It is a sound instinct that has led modern artists and writers into the realm of satire. If the satirist himself have a critical eye, an undeluded mind, satire can enable him to persuade others to see with his eyes, to analyze with that mind. With satire he can drown the nonsensical in ridicule and bathe our crimes in acid.

Satire is a powerful civilizing agent: if we ever become civilized it will probably be satire almost as much as poetry that will have accomplished it. Because the great criteria of satire are always truth and sanity. Even the minor satire of deriding foibles, affectations, crazes, and fashions strikes its sparks from the flint of fact. But satire may deepen into being a criticism of humanity and of life itself. When it does, it depends for its dignity upon the principles it invokes, and upon the depth, breadth, and sanity of the satirist's vision. Grace, wit, and virtuosity are all delightful adjuncts without which the would-be satirist may find himself only would-be. Flippancy, shallow-

ness, and insincerity, however, are fatal. The great satirist sees straight, he sees far, and he sees deep. That is what makes him great.

It is also what makes satire valuable. Not that we want satire all the time, or that everything is in need of being satirized. Men and God's world need to be praised and loved, too, and deserve to be. But sometimes they need to be knocked off their perch, and even, on occasion, to have their blocks knocked off. They need to have their eyes opened to their own blindness and foolishness. And when they are mean, cruel, or revengeful, their failings need to be beaten to a pulp.

The satirist, like the critic, is not someone who hates happiness and beauty, and tries to spoil them for you by finding fault when you have been enjoying yourself. He may love them, and want to jolt you and me out of a false and selfish complacence that leaves us willing to enjoy them in an ivory tower while others sicken and starve. He may love them, and want to free us from a degrading conception of happiness or a cheap counterfeit of beauty. Loving beauty, he may feel the need to free it from the encrustations that impede its grace and spoil its outline. He may aid us in seeing the things that should be there as well as in rejecting the things that shouldn't. To destroy falsehood is not the least of the ways of praising and loving truth.

When the denouncers lean over the edge of the pulpit, though, and start denouncing, a lot of us tend to slip unobtrusively out of the door. And so the satirists lie in wait for us in all sorts of unlikely places, masquerading as clowns, jugglers, mountebanks, nightclub entertainers, novelists, newspaper columnists, love poets, lunatics, and even as historians, economists, philosophers. They'll get hold of us and sneak some critical sanity into us before we know what's happening, while we think they're up to something entirely different. We couldn't do without them, and wouldn't want to They've been doing a wonderful job, from Aristophanes to Rodgers and Hart. But we still have a lot of people and a lot of things that need to have the living daylights lambasted out of them. Is there a satirist in the house?

AESOP AND THE SATIRIC ANIMAL FABLE



THE STRAIN *of satire in Aesop's* Fables *is tenuous but clear. These moralized animals—the frugal ant, the tuneful playboy grasshopper, the dog in the manger, the sly fox, the gullible crow with the cheese, the greedy hound who loses the real bone by grabbing at the reflected one—all represent weaknesses or vices too general for any reader to resent them as personal imputations. If we see ourselves in them at all, it is rather abstractly as members of entire groups to which they apply, not as individuals singled out for criticism. Mainly we see them as pictures of the world, and even bandits have no objection to being warned against other bandits.*

The real foe that the fabulist circumvents is not wrath but boredom Advice that would fatigue us in solemn sermons goes down pleasantly enough in these whimsical apologues of the toad trying to swell herself into an ox or the frogs dissatisfied with the log for their king. Who wants to hear in set terms, however, what "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse" puts playfully, that a plain fare enjoyed in safety is better than a banquet nibbled trembling? Below the surface, even very thinly veiled,

a meaning gives depth; but moralizing with no tang of wit or imaginative invention is merely tiresome.

Aesop himself is perhaps more a legendary than a historical figure. Some of the fables attributed to him were told by the Egyptians, others can be found in the Pantchatantra. *His biographers make him a hunchbacked Phrygian slave, and, by some of their stories, a pert literalist who might well have taken to heart some of his own sage counsels about how to behave toward powerful superiors. Sent for a water pitcher he would bring it empty because Xanthus, his master, had not specified that he wanted water in it; told to have beans for dinner he would prepare beans and nothing else, and often get a drubbing for his ill-judged smartness. Finally, Xanthus got rid of so inconveniently exact a servant by freeing him.*

The animal fable has always been a popular means of satire. It was used all the way through the Middle Ages. In Reynard the Fox *it almost achieves the proportions of a comic epic; Chaucer uses it in* The Cock and the Fox *and* The Parliament of Fowls. *There are hints of it in Jonson's* Volpone, *where the characters have animal names Volpone, the Fox, Mosca, the Gadfly; Corbaccio and Voltore, the Crow and the Vulture. La Fontaine's verse fables adapt Aesop with exquisite and sprightly wit. Rostand used a barnyard and its denizens to voice the romantic idealism of his* Chantecler. *Even more recently, Walt Disney's* Three Little Pigs *had a world badly shaken by financial collapse bravely singing, "Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?"*

Not many animal fabulists make any serious endeavor to follow Goldsmith's injunction and have the animals talk or behave like animals. It is only conventionally that the fox is foxy, the cat a slypuss, and the ass a fool Aesop certainly slanders the beasts by attributing to them kinds of silliness or treachery that are seen only in human beings. But the realism of natural history is not, of course, the realism fables aim at, their talking animals are only a protective disguise for a realism that's pretty true to human *nature. Skillfully employed, the satire of the animal fable can range from cutting ferocity to a comedy that is quaint and sometimes tender.*

FOUR FABLES

*** Aesop is supposed to have lived some time after 560 B.C. But the *Fables* originated in many places and in times much more remote ***

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A HUNGRY fox stole one day into a vineyard bursting with clusters of grapes all ripe and luscious for eating. But they grew on trellises so high that he leaped, and leaped again, until he was worn out and panting. Giving up at last, he stalked away jauntily. "Take them who will," he sniffed. "The grapes are sour!"

THE OX AND THE FROG

An ox, browsing in a field, happened to set his foot down among some young frogs, and squashed one of them to death. The rest hopped off in terror to tell their mother of the catastrophe. The beast that did it, they added, was the most enormous creature they had ever seen. "Was it this big?" asked the old Frog, swelling and puffing up her speckled green belly. "Oh, bigger by a vast deal," said they. "Was it *so* big?" demanded she, distending herself still more. "Oh, mamma," they replied, "if you were to burst you would never be so big." The old Frog paid no attention, she took a tremendous breath, and swelled herself till her eyes bulged. "Was it," she wheezed, "so b—" but at that moment she did indeed burst.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A wolf was lapping from a running brook when he spied a stray lamb paddling a little way down the stream. "Scoundrel!" he said, moving down to her, "how dare you muddy the water I am drinking?" "How can I do that?" the lamb asked humbly. "It runs from you to me, not from me to you." "Never mind that," snapped the wolf. "Only a year ago you slandered me with evil names behind my back." The lamb began to tremble. "Indeed, sir, a year ago I was not even born." "Well, then," the wolf said, "if it wasn't you, it was your father, and that's the same thing—don't think you're going to argue me out of my dinner"—and with that he leaped upon the lamb, and tore her to bits.

Four Fables

THE TOWN MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

A plain, sensible country mouse entertained in his hole one day a fine mouse from the town. They had been old playfellows; and the country mouse wanted, as a good host, to treat his guest with all the courtesy possible. He set before him for dinner a dish of fine oatmeal, a carefully hoarded reserve of delicate gray peas and bacon, some cheese parings, and to crown all with a dessert, a remnant of a charming mellow old apple. In good manners, he didn't even eat any himself, lest there should not be enough for the guest. So that the other should not notice, he sat and pretended to nibble at a piece of wheaten straw.

At last, "Old crony," said the town spark, "give me leave to speak freely to you. How can you bear to live in this nasty, dirty, gloomy old hole, with nothing around you but woods, fields, mountains, and streams? Wouldn't you prefer polite conversation to the monotonous chirping of birds, and court-splendor to this crude backwater? Take my word for it, a change to town will do you good. Remember, you don't live forever. Enjoy yourself today; who knows what can happen tomorrow?"

Convinced, the country mouse agreed to start off to town with his friend that night. They did so; and about midnight entered a fine mansion where there had been a banquet. Various tidbits not yet cleared away by the servants lay about the dining-room. The country guest crouched on a rich Persian carpet, and his courtier-friend entertained, changing the courses with elegant finesse, and sampling each dainty first to see if it was fit with all the judiciousness of a clerk of the cuisine. Morsels of the roasts, with rich sauces and gravies, greens, remnants of a soufflée, various cheeses, nuts, fruits, the melting remains of a sherbet, were placed before him, and he enjoyed himself like a delighted epicure.

Suddenly the dining-room door was opened, and they scuttled under the hanging folds of the tablecloth. Worse still, two huge mastiffs dashed barking into the room. The country mouse almost died of terror as he flung himself across the room, and ran panting along the wall, hearing that hoarse sound in his ears, as his feet slipped on the polished floor. The hole under the window-seat, by which they had entered, seemed leagues away. At last, his heart pounding, he scrambled into safety He and his urban friend collapsed in the snug darkness. When he had recovered a little, "If these are your town-luxuries," said the country mouse, "you're welcome to them. Give me my poor quiet hole and my homely, comfortable gray peas."

GREEK COMEDY AND THE MERRY WIT OF ARISTOPHANES



IMAGINE A *burlesque show bawdier than anything that would be allowed on Broadway, but irradiated with brilliance, high spirits, and splendid bursts of poetry. Imagine the librettist disliking some of the writers and politicians of his day about as much as the California fruit growers do John Steinbeck, or the Liberty League the New Deal, and having the right to sling an almost unlimited amount of mud. Imagine him a comic genius of a reckless violence and ingenuity that leave the insults of Sheridan Whiteside sounding like a spinster's prim timidities and the farcical inventiveness of Kaufman and Hart like exercises in understatement. Imagine that the theater, instead of being available daily to men avid for a glimpse of Gypsy Rose Lee in a G string, is open only a few times a year, and that then the whole community is there—indeed, must be there—as a civic and religious duty. Imagine, finally, the entire clergy, clad in full*

canonicals, ceremoniously enthroned in the front row of seats. Take all these things together, and you have something resembling what the performance of a comedy by Aristophanes must have been in the Athenian theater of the fifth century B.C.

Greek comedy grew out of the clowning and skylarking of revelers at harvest and vintage feasts. These were carnival times of special license, like a Mardi Gras, in which bands of mummers roamed about, entertaining the spectators with spur-of-the-moment buffooneries and wisecracks. Insult and mockery were the joyful privileges of the occasion, and had to be swallowed even by those whom it might be dangerous to attack at other times. Gradually these high-jinks developed into rude farce plays jovially bedaubed with smut. When the komoi, *or revel bands, at last received public recognition and financial support, they retained their proud right of* parrhesia*—free speech. All these characteristics of the comic rout—the broad farce, the unabashed dirt, the abusive freedom—Aristophanes fused into his marvelously rollicking plays.*

Although such qualities make comedy an ultra-democratic institution, Aristophanes himself has an aristocratic and conservative bias. A rich man and a landowner, he disliked the direction in which the Athenian state had moved under Pericles. Attempted self-rule by the people, he thought, led merely to the tyranny of ignorant and unscrupulous demagogues like Cleon, whom he never ceased to lash. The sea-borne prosperity of Athens led to the Athenian Empire, and that to the disastrous colonial imperialism and the jealousies of the other Greek states that involved them all in the ruin of the Peloponnesian War.

The tremendous intellectual advances of his day, the New Enlightenment, Aristophanes assimilated just sufficiently to sharpen his mockery of the Sophists with partial sympathy, jumbling the scientific enquiries of Anaxagoras and the rhetorical analysis of Protagoras with the dialectic of Socrates in a riot of satiric exaggeration. Especially was he unwillingly impressed by Euripides, whom he couldn't get out of his crop, and against whom he looses fling after fling. The tragic dramatist, indeed, colors the thought of Aristophanes so deeply that echoes of him keep vibrating even in those plays where Aristophanes is not deliberately attacking him.

Poet and wit at the same time, Aristophanes excels in the wild fitness of the fables he devises for his themes. The cheerful profanity of The Birds *establishes a commonwealth in the sky, from which the birds blockade the Gods to prevent them from receiving their supplies of incense from*

Earth and, with the help of Prometheus (hiding beneath a large umbrella from the wrath of "Them Above"), starve Zeus into surrendering the scepter of the world. Lysistrata, a daring antiwar comedy, shows the women blackmailing the men by going on a sex strike and denying their embraces until the men, in desperation, are willing to end the Peloponnesian struggle. Even in a somewhat cleaned-up version, the play was a 1930 hit in New York. The Frogs has Aeschylus and Euripides furious rivals in Hades, each angrily defending his own tragedies against attack and pelting those of his rival with such violent abuse that Dionysus, their judge, is completely bewildered to choose between them.

Aristophanes exploits every trick of comedy from fantastic puns and witty turns of phrase to situations of a ludicrous hilarity. In The Frogs, Dionysus, footsore and weary with the long descent into Hades, is overtaken by a funeral. He tries to persuade the corpse to allow his bearers to carry some luggage. "How heavy?" asks the corpse, sitting up. When Dionysus protests the price, "Bearers, move on!" says the dead man, lying down on his bier again. "Nine obols," bargains Dionysus desperately. "Strike me living if I will!" is the answer, and the procession leaves the god behind. The witty appropriateness of that "Strike me living!" is no less wildly true to essential reality than the whole marvelous situation by which the divine nature has been revealed as human, all-too human.

This is indeed the very heart of Aristophanes' merit, that though his method is burlesque, its wildest exaggerations remain true to nature. When Lysistrata proposes her oath to the other women, their rebellion against taking it is funny but emotionally convincing. So is the agony of Kinesias and the other men, being tempted, tantalized, and frustrated by Myrrhina and their wives: the women undulating close to them in revealing décolletés and peekaboo skirts, teasing them with whiffs of perfume and kisses suggested and withheld, sliding up close, shivering and sighing, and just at the last minute eluding the men's tormented arms. Their sufferings are comic precisely because they are real, and so are those of their wives, so that we sympathize while we laugh, as Aristophanes did too.

The secret sympathy which Aristophanes felt, even when he was laughing from the opposing camp, is, I suspect, the reason for the success with which he parodies Euripides. Blasphemous and immoral as he seems to have felt Euripides to be, he was more deeply impressed by him in truth than by the great figures of Aeschylus and Sophocles. But Aristophanes did not question them; they were already elder figures in the drama, accepted

among the other pieties of his childhood. The dreadful problems of vengeance, justice, and fate posed by Aeschylus, and the psychological horrors portrayed by Sophocles, are in fact no less disturbing to a thoughtful mind than the iconoclasms of Euripides. Had Euripides appeared a generation earlier, Aristophanes might have revered him with them, and used him to bludgeon some younger dramatist with, but he would never have studied him so painstakingly. It is to this unwilling fascination Euripides exercised over the mind of Aristophanes that we owe the wonderful parody scene of The Frogs, *which even today, twenty-four centuries later, can make us laugh aloud.*

Aristophanes' understanding and his feeling for the dramatic prevent the scene from being mere attack on Euripides There would be no fun if Aeschylus had things all his own way. And when the wrangle once gets going, Aristophanes' sense of the comic can't help spying out weaknesses in Aeschylus too. Euripides is allowed to get in some good resounding strokes, and if he hasn't anything quite as funny as the famous "oil-can" with which Aeschylus punctures one after another of his prologues, it should be noted that the comedy of this is quite inconclusive and that equal damage might be done to the prologues of Aeschylus with the same instrument. Otherwise, Aristophanes holds the scales pretty evenly between them, and ridicules both by calculated exaggerations The ornate and archaic grandeur in Aeschylus, Aristophanes puffs up into pompous flatulence; the simplicity in Euripides he waters down to prosaic flatness When Dionysus makes his choice at the end, his decision is more a momentary impulse than a reasoned judgment. Some of the weaknesses in both poets have been gaily illuminated, and neither has been mortally wounded.

The greatness of Aristophanes does not lie, however, in his fairness to individuals. Good-humored though he is in The Frogs, *over the course of a lifetime Aristophanes is gravely unjust to Euripides it is odd to realize that the voice of Aristophanes may have been one of those that influenced his old enemy Cleon to prosecute Euripides for "impiety" Aristophanes is no less irresponsible in his confusion of Socrates with those more unscrupulous Sophists who were ready to "make the worse appear the better cause," as Plato has Socrates say before the jury that condemned him to the hemlock. Perhaps Aristophanes is redeemed a little by his brave attacks on the demagogues, his undeviating opposition to the war party, and the noble patriotism that rings through his plays*

But his real value is something independent of either his misrepre-

sentations of Socrates and Euripides or the courage of his stand against imperialism. It lies partly in a feeling for sanity and balance, for truth even, underneath all the cheerful unreliability with which he handles particular facts. He wrongly blackens Socrates by making him a perverter of truth, but he really did hate deception, sophistical manipulation, intellectual trickery. He hated self-seeking, greed, envy, cruelty, oppression; he hated to see his native city corrupted by dishonest politicians; he hated the sufferings of a needless war. But even more than these, Aristophanes' virtue lies in a rich vitality, a zest for everything that is healthy and hearty and normal in life. This sings through his glorious enjoyment of men and women, and slanderous jokes, and eating and drinking, and—but the restraints of our society won't let us say all the things Aristophanes approved. They fill his plays with wild fun and singing beauty.

THE FROGS

*** *The Frogs* was first performed in 405 B.C. The judges awarded it first prize, the audience enjoyed it so heartily that a second performance was given a few days later. The translation here used is that of Professor Gilbert Murray. Dionysus has a long and hilarious descent into Hades before the trial scene with which we open ***

Aeschylus and Euripides Violently Lambaste Each Other's Tragedies

The scene is in front of the house of Pluto. The Chorus is gathered before the portal. The door opens. Enter Euripides, Dionysus, and Aeschylus

EURIPIDES Pray, no advice to me! I won't give way,
I claim that I'm more master of my art.
DIONYSUS. You hear him, Aeschylus. Why don't you speak?
EURIPIDES. He wants to open with an awful silence—
The blood-curdling reserve of his first scene.
DIONYSUS. My dear sir, I must beg! Control your language.
EURIPIDES. I know him, I've seen through him years ago;
Bard of the "noble savage," wooden-mouthed,
No door, no bolt, no bridle to his tongue,
A torrent of pure bombast—tied in bundles!
AESCHYLUS (*breaking out*). How say'st thou, Son o' the goddess of the Greens?—
You dare speak thus of me, you phrase-collector,
Blind-beggar-bard and scum of rifled rag-bags!
Oh, you shall rue it!
DIONYSUS. Stop! Stop, Aeschylus,
Strike not thine heart to fire on rancour old.
AESCHYLUS. No; I'll expose this crutch-and-cripple playwright,
And what he's worth for all his insolence
DIONYSUS (*to attendants*). A lamb, a black lamb, quick, boys! Bring it out
To sacrifice; a hurricane's let loose!
AESCHYLUS (*to Euripides*). You and your Cretan dancing-solos! You
And the ugly amours that you set to verse!

DIONYSUS (*interposing*). One moment, please, most noble Aeschylus!
And you, poor wretch, if you have any prudence,
Get out of the hailstones quick, or else, by Zeus,
Some word as big as your head will catch you crash
Behind the ear, and knock out all the . . . Telephus!
Nay, Aeschylus, pray, pray control your anger;
Examine and submit to be examined
With a cool head. Two poets should not meet
In fishwife style; but here are you, straight off,
Ablaze and roaring like an oak on fire.

EURIPIDES. For my part I'm quite ready, with no shrinking,
To bite first or be bitten, as he pleases.
Here are my dialogue, music, and construction;
Here's Peleus at your service, Meleâger,
And Aeolus, and . . . yes, Telephus, by all means!

DIONYSUS. Do you consent to the trial, Aeschylus? Speak.

AESCHYLUS. I well might take objection to the place;
It's no fair field for him and me.

DIONYSUS. Why not?

AESCHYLUS. Because my writings haven't died with me,
As his have; so he'll have them all to hand . . .
However, I waive the point, if you think fit.

DIONYSUS. Go, some one, bring me frankincense and fire
That I may pray for guidance, to decide
This contest in the Muses' strictest ways,
To whom, meantime, uplift your hymn of praise!

Dionysus is now seated on a throne as judge.
The poets stand on either side before him

DIONYSUS. Now, quick to work. Be sure you both do justice to your cases,
Clear sense, no loose analogies, and no long commonplaces.

EURIPIDES. A little later I will treat my own artistic mettle,
This person's claims I should prefer immediately to settle.
I'll show you how he posed and prosed, with what audacious fooling
He tricked an audience fresh and green from Phrynichus's schooling.
Those sole veiled figures on the stage were first among his graces,
Achilles, say, or Niobe, who never showed their faces,
But stood like so much scene-painting, and never a grunt they uttered!

DIONYSUS. Why, no, by Zeus, no more they did!

EURIPIDES. And on the Chorus spluttered
Through long song-systems, four on end, the actors mute as fishes[1]

DIONYSUS. I somehow loved that silence, though, and felt it met my wishes
As no one's talk does nowadays!

EURIPIDES. You hadn't yet seen through it!
That's all.

DIONYSUS. I really think you're right! But still, what made him do it?

EURIPIDES. The instinct of a charlatan, to keep the audience guessing
If Niobe ever meant to speak—the play meantime progressing!

DIONYSUS. Of course it was! The sly old dog, to think of how he tricked us!—
Don't (*to Aeschylus*) ramp and fume!

EURIPIDES (*excusing Aeschylus*). We're apt to do so when the facts convict us!
—Then after this tomfoolery, the heroine, feeling calmer,
Would utter some twelve wild-bull words, on mid-way in the drama,
Long ones, with crests and beetling brows, and gorgons round the border,
That no man ever heard on earth.

AESCHYLUS. The red plague . . . !

DIONYSUS. Order, order!

EURIPIDES. Intelligible—not one line!

DIONYSUS (*to Aeschylus*). Please! Won't your teeth stop gnashing?

EURIPIDES. All fosses and Scamander-beds, and bloody targes flashing,
With gryphon-eagles bronze-embossed, and crags, and riders reeling,
Which somehow never quite joined on.

DIONYSUS. By Zeus, sir, quite my feeling!
A question comes in Night's long hours, that haunts me like a spectre,
What kind of fish or fowl you'd call a "russet hippalector."

AESCHYLUS (*breaking in*). It was a ship's sign, idiot, such as every joiner fixes!

DIONYSUS. Indeed! I thought perhaps it meant that music-man Eryxis!

EURIPIDES. You like then, in a tragic play, a cock? You think it mixes?

AESCHYLUS (*to Euripides*). And what did you yourself produce, O fool with pride deluded?

EURIPIDES. Not "hippalectors," thank the Lord, nor "tragelaphs," as you did—
The sort of ornament they use to fill a Persian curtain!
—I had the Drama straight from you, all bloated and uncertain,
Weighed down with rich and heavy words, puffed out past comprehension.
I took the case in hand; applied treatment for such distension—
Beetroot, light phrases, little walks, hot book-juice, and cold reasoning;
Then fed her up on solos. . . .

DIONYSUS (*aside*). With Cephisophon for seasoning!

EURIPIDES. I didn't rave at random, or plunge in and make confusions.
My first appearing character explained, with due allusions,
The whole play's pedigree

DIONYSUS (*aside*). Your own you left in wise obscurity!

EURIPIDES. Then no one from the start with me could idle with security.
They had to work. The men, the slaves, the women, all made speeches,
The kings, the little girls, the hags . . .

AESCHYLUS. Just see the things he teaches!
And shouldn't you be hanged for that?

EURIPIDES. No, by the lord Apollo!
It's democratic!

DIONYSUS (*to Euripides*). That's no road for you, my friend, to follow;
You'll find the 'little walk' too steep; I recommend you quit it.

EURIPIDES. Next, I taught all the town to talk with freedom.

AESCHYLUS. I admit it.
'Twere better, ere you taught them, you had died amid their curses!

EURIPIDES. I gave them canons to apply and squares for marking verses;
Taught them to see, think, understand, to scheme for what they wanted,
To fall in love, think evil, question all things. . . .

AESCHYLUS. Granted, granted!

EURIPIDES. I put things on the stage that came from daily life and business.
Where men could catch me if I tripped; could listen without dizziness
To things they knew, and judge my art. I never crashed and lightened
And bullied people's senses out, nor tried to keep them frightened
With Magic Swans and Aethiop knights, loud barb and clanging vizor!
Then look at my disciples, too, and mark what creatures his are!
Phormisius is his product and the looby lump Megainetus,
All trumpet, lance, moustache, and glare, who twist their clubs of pine at us;
While Cleitophon is mine, sirs, and Theramenes the Matchless!

DIONYSUS. Theramenes! Ah, that's the man! All danger leaves him scratchless.
His friends may come to grief, and he be found in awkward fixes,
But always tumbles right end up, not aces—no: all sixes!

EURIPIDES. This was the kind of lore I brought
To school my town in ways of thought;
I mingled reasoning with my art
And shrewdness, till I fired their heart
To brood, to think things through and through;
And rule their houses better, too.

DIONYSUS. Yes, by the powers, that's very true!
No burgher now, who comes indoors,
But straight looks round the house and roars:
"Where is the saucepan gone? And who
Has bitten that sprat's head away?
And, out, alas! The earthen pot
I bought last year, is not, is not!
Where are the leeks of yesterday?
And who has gnawed this olive, pray?"
Whereas, before they took his school,
Each sat at home, a simple, cool,
Religious, unsuspecting fool,
And happy in his sheep-like way!

[*At this juncture Aeschylus becomes impatient of detailed criticism and makes a general onslaught on Euripides' entire manner of writing. The point of this celebrated scene, aside from its hilarious slapstick, is that Euripides deals with such low themes in such bald prosaic language that even the vulgarest commonplace objects are not out of place in his work. The word that Professor Murray translates "oil-can" was originally a flask of oil, which every Greek carried with him when he traveled*]

AESCHYLUS. By Zeus, I won't go pecking word by word
At every phrase, I'll take one little oil-can,
God helping me, and send your prologues pop!
EURIPIDES. My prologues pop . . . with oil-cans?
AESCHYLUS. Just one oil-can!
You write them so that nothing comes amiss,
The bed-quilt, or the oil-can, or the clothes-bag,
All suit your tragic verse! Wait and I'll prove it.
EURIPIDES. You'll prove it? Really?
AESCHYLUS. Yes.
DIONYSUS. Begin to quote.
EURIPIDES. "Aegyptus, so the tale is spread afar,
With fifty youths fled in a sea-borne car,
But, reaching Argos . . ."
AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!
DIONYSUS. What's that about the oil-can! Drat the thing!
Quote him another prologue, and let's see.
EURIPIDES. "Dionysus, who with wand and fawn-skin dight
On great Parnassus races in the light
Of lamps far-flashing, . . ."
AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS. Alas! again the oil-can finds our heart!

EURIPIDES (*beginning to reflect anxiously*). Oh, it won't come to much, though! Here's another,
With not a crack to stick the oil-can in!
"No man hath bliss in full and flawless health;
Lo, this one hath high race, but little wealth;
That, base in blood, hath . . ."

AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS. Euripides!

EURIPIDES. Well?

DIONYSUS. Better furl your sails;
This oil-can seems inclined to raise the wind!

EURIPIDES. Bah, I disdain to give a thought to it!
I'll dash it from his hands in half a minute.

He racks his memory

DIONYSUS. Well, quote another,—and beware of oil-cans.

EURIPIDES. "Great Cadmus long ago, Agenor's son,
From Sidon racing, . . ."

AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS. Oh, this is awful! Buy the thing outright,
Before it messes every blessed prologue!

EURIPIDES. I buy him off?

DIONYSUS. I strongly recommend it.

EURIPIDES. No; I have many prologues yet to cite
Where he can't find a chink to pour his oil.
"As rapid wheels to Pisa bore him on,
Tantalian Pelops . . ."

AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS. What did I tell you? There it sticks again!
You might let Pelops have a new one, though—
You get quite good ones very cheap just now.

EURIPIDES. By Zeus, not yet! I still have plenty left.
"From earth King Oineus, . . ."

AESCHYLUS. Found his oil-can gone!

EURIPIDES. You *must* first let me quote one line entire!
"From earth King Oineus goodly harvest won,
But, while he worshipped, . . ."

AESCHYLUS Found his oil-can gone!

DIONYSUS. During the prayers! Who can have been the thief!

EURIPIDES (*desperately*). Oh, let him be! I defy him answer this—
"Great Zeus in heaven, the word of truth has flown, . . ."

DIONYSUS. O mercy! *His* is certain to be gone!
They bristle with long oil-cans, hedgehog-wise,
Your prologues; they're as bunged up as your eyes!
For God's sake change the subject.—Take his songs!
EURIPIDES. Songs? Yes, I have materials to show
How bad his are, and always all alike.
CHORUS. What in the world shall we look for next?
Aeschylus' music! I feel perplexed
How he can want it mended.
I have always held that never a man
Had written or sung since the world began
Melodies half so splendid!
(Can he really find a mistake
In the master of inspiration?
I feel some consternation
For our Bacchic prince's sake!)
EURIPIDES. *Wonderful songs they are! You'll see directly;*
I'll run them all together into one.
DIONYSUS. I'll take some pebbles, then, and count for you.
EURIPIDES (*singing*). "O Phthian Achilles, canst hark to the battle's man-slaying shock,
Yea, shock, and not to succour come?
Lo, we of the Mere give worship to Hermes, the fount of our stock,
Yea, *shock, and not to succour come!*"
DIONYSUS. Two shocks to you, Aeschylus, there!
EURIPIDES. "Thou choice of Achaia, wide-ruling Atrides, give heed to my schooling!
Yea, shock, and not to succour come."
DIONYSUS. A third shock that, I declare!
EURIPIDES. "Ah, peace, and give ear! For the Bee-Maids be *near to* ope wide Artemis' portals.
Yea, shock-a-nock a-succour come!
Behold it is mine to sing of the sign of the way fate-laden to mortals;
Yah, shocker-knocker succucum!"
DIONYSUS O Zeus Almighty, what a chain of shocks!
I think I'll go away and take a bath,
The shocks are too much for my nerves and kidneys!
EURIPIDES. Not till you've heard another little set
Compounded from his various cithara-songs
DIONYSUS Well then, proceed, but don't put any shocks in!

EURIPIDES. "How the might twin-throned of Achaia
for Hellene chivalry bringeth
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
The prince of the powers of storm, the Sphinx thereover he wingeth
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
With deedful hand and lance the furious fowl of the air
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
That the wild wind-walking hounds unhindered tear
Flattothrat toflattothrat!
And War toward Aias leaned his weight,
Flattothrat toflattothrait!"

[*Aeschylus sings a similar parody of Euripides' choruses, in which he burlesques their emotional flavor into wild bathos.*]

DIONYSUS. Come, stop the singing!
AESCHYLUS. I've had quite enough!
What I want is to bring him to the balance,
The one sure test of what our art is worth!
DIONYSUS. So that's my business next? Come forward, please;
I'll weigh out poetry like so much cheese!
A large pair of scales is brought forward, while the Chorus sing
CHORUS. Oh, the workings of genius are keen and laborious!
Here's a new wonder, incredible, glorious!
Who but this twain Have the boldness of brain
To so quaint an invention to run?
Such a marvellous thing, if another had said it had
Happened to him, I should never have credited;
I should have just Thought that he must
Simply be talking for fun!
DIONYSUS. Come, take your places by the balance.
AESCHYLUS and EURIPIDES. There!
DIONYSUS. Now, each take hold of it, and speak your verse,
And don't let go until I say "Cuckoo."
AESCHYLUS and EURIPIDES (*taking their stand at either side of the balance*). We have it.
DIONYSUS. Now, each a verse into the scale!
EURIPIDES (*quoting the first verse of his "Medea"*). "Would God no Argo e'er had winged the brine."
AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Philoctetes"*). "Spercheios, and ye haunts of grazing kine!"

DIONYSUS. Cuckoo! Let go.—Ah, down comes Aeschylus
Far lower.

EURIPIDES. Why, what can be the explanation?

DIONYSUS. That river he put in, to wet his wares
The way wool-dealers do, and make them heavier!
Besides, you know, the verse you gave had wings!

AESCHYLUS. Well, let him speak another and we'll see.

DIONYSUS. Take hold again then.

AESCHYLUS and EURIPIDES. There you are.

DIONYSUS. Now speak.

EURIPIDES (*quoting his "Antigone"*). "Persuasion, save in speech, no temple hath."

AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Niobe"*). "Lo, one god craves no offering, even Death."

DIONYSUS. Let go, let go!

EURIPIDES. Why, his goes down again!

DIONYSUS He put in Death, a monstrous heavy thing!

EURIPIDES. But my Persuasion made a lovely line!

DIONYSUS. Persuasion has no bulk and not much weight.
Do look about you for some ponderous line
To force the scale down, something large and strong.

EURIPIDES. Where have I such a thing, now? Where?

DIONYSUS (*mischievously, quoting some unknown play of Euripides*).
I'll tell you;
"Achilles has two aces and a four!"—
(*Aloud*) Come, speak your lines, this is the final bout.

EURIPIDES (*quoting his "Meleager"*). "A mace of weighted iron his right hand sped."

AESCHYLUS (*quoting his "Glaucus"*). "Chariot on chariot lay, dead piled on dead.

DIONYSUS (*as the scale turns*). He beats you this time too!

EURIPIDES. How does he do it?

DIONYSUS. Two chariots and two corpses in the scale—
Why, ten Egyptians couldn't lift so much!

AESCHYLUS (*breaking out*). Come, no more line-for-lines! Let him jump in
And sit in the scale himself, with all his books,
His wife, his children, his Cephisophon!
I'll back two lines of mine against the lot!

The central door opens and Pluto with his suite comes forth

A VOICE. Room for the King!

PLUTO (*to Dionysus*). Well, is the strife decided?

DIONYSUS (*to Pluto*). I won't decide! The men are both my friends;
Why should I make an enemy of either?
The one's so good, and I so love the other!
PLUTO (*interrupting*). Come, give your judgment!
DIONYSUS. Well, I'll judge like this;
My choice shall fall on him my soul desires!
EURIPIDES. Remember all the gods by whom you swore
To take me home with you, and choose your friend!
DIONYSUS. My tongue hath sworn;—but I'll choose Aeschylus!
EURIPIDES. What have you done, you traitor?
DIONYSUS. I? I've judged
That Aeschylus gets the prize. Why shouldn't I?
EURIPIDES. Canst meet mine eyes, fresh from thy deed of shame?
DIONYSUS. What is shame, that the . . . Theatre deems no shame?
EURIPIDES. Hard heart! You mean to leave your old friend dead?
DIONYSUS. Who knoweth if to live is but to die? . . .
If breath is bread and sleep a woolly lie?
PLUTO. Come in, then, both.
DIONYSUS. Again?
PLUTO. To feast with me
Before you sail.
DIONYSUS. With pleasure! That's the way
Duly to crown a well-contented day!

THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY



THE ANTHOLOGY *contains more than four thousand epigrams and short poems by over three hundred poets. It was collected and preserved by a succession of editors, from Meleager, in the first century B.C, to Planudes, ambassador from Constantinople to Venice in 1327 The poems are not primarily satiric, but cover a wide range, pastoral, amatory, convivial, philosophic, elegiac. Their chiseled language, however; their brevity —few exceed twelve lines in length; and a structure that often depends on surprise or antithesis, give many of them the ring of satire.*

FOUR SATIRIC EPIGRAMS

««« The poems in the *Anthology* range in date from around 490 B C to A D 1000. The first of the translations used here was made by Robert Bland, the third by William Cowper, the second and fourth by the editor »»»

This rudely sculptured porter-pot
Denotes where sleeps a female sot;
Who passed her life, good easy soul,
In sweetly chirping o'er her bowl.
Not for her friends or children dear
She mourns, but only for her beer.
Even in the very grave, they say,
She thirsts for drink to wet her clay;
And, faith, she thinks it very wrong
This jug should stand unfilled so long.
—Antipater of Sidon

Her love she vowed was mine fore'er,
Now says those vows were writ in water;
And you, O lamp, that heard her swear,
Have seen her yield to the first who sought her.
—Meleager

My name, my country, what are they to thee?
What, whether proud or base my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed all other men;
Perhaps I fell below them all. What then?
Suffice it, stranger, that thou seest a tomb.
Thou knowst its use. It hides—no matter whom.
—Paulus Silentiarius

Dion of Tarsus, here I lie,
Who sixty years have seen.
A man without a wife was I:
Would my sire had been.—*Anonymous*

THE GRACEFUL RIDICULE OF HORACE



HORACE CITES Aristophanes and Lucilius as his literary ancestors, but he is more closely related to the domestic satire of later Greek comedy. The slashing political and social comment of Aristophanes was not for the Rome of which Augustus Caesar had made himself master. There was, to be sure, no clangorous iron tyranny, for Augustus was adroit, and he was a cultivated patron of literature and the arts. The metal fist was hidden beneath the most caressingly velvety of gloves. Nothing much needed to be said or done. Poets could merely be allowed to feel that political themes, save for celebrating the triumphs of the principate, were, well, a little—injudicious. If they must satirize, the weaknesses, absurdities, and vices of individuals were safer.*

The writers got the point, Horace among them. The son of a freedman, given a good education, first at Rome and later at Athens, he had enlisted with Brutus and fought on the republican side at the battle of Philippi He was spared by the amnesty, but his land was confiscated. Returned to Rome, he struggled into a minor clerkship in the Treasury Office, dreamed of abandoning Italy to her fate and seeking a new home in some happy isle beyond the western seas He began to ridicule the stoic ideals of the republicans, with their harsh intolerance, and to drift into a gently relaxed epicureanism, he renounced participation in public affairs, he turned to an urbane and exquisite poetic trifling The wealthy and aristo-

cratic Maecenas took him up, gave him the Sabine farm to which he so often retired, introduced him to Augustus. The imperial master of the state was gracious, Horace paid his meed of praise, a little bit ironically fulsome in the first epistle of the second book, rather labored in a few duty odes But great and weighty themes, he often says, are not for his playful muse.

Instead he turns to the everyday life around him. Rome has foolishness enough to wink at—singers who won't sing when asked and who won't stop when started, bores who cling and can't be shaken loose, snobbery and glittering ostentation, avarice gloating on its moneybags and dead to all the other delights of life But Horace's tone is always graceful and mocking, never one of Juvenalian rage. He gives a sly prick instead of stabbing to the heart, he is more amused than saddened.

Often as not he speeds his light darts against his own weaknesses. He loves to celebrate the fun of drinking and women. But he enjoys suggesting that if he has not finished the ode he was engaged on, Maecenas will suspect it was because the fumes of last night's wine—and maybe the night's before that—have not left his brain unclouded. And although he tells us, "I lived for the girls" (vixi puellis), *he likes insinuating that his Lydias, Chloes, Lalages, Pyrrhas, and Glyceras didn't find him irresistible. But Horace is not breaking his own heart, even in love. He has none of the* odi et amo *of Catullus. He sees through the entanglements of infatuation with an amusement that is both gentle and detached. He has been just enough in to understand, but he doesn't intend to get painfully burned. He'll keep to the golden mean, admire nothing too heartily, and enjoy each day as it comes*

Horace is hard to translate. He is never pompous, and he is never slangy or vulgar; his lucid ease is at the same time wrought to the highest polish. The scholarly translations reduce all this to wood and platitude. Paraphrase gives his flavor more persuasively. Louis Untermeyer has perhaps the best fusion of grace and accuracy; Austin Dobson sometimes achieves the air of exquisite artifice; F. P. A.'s impudent modernizations, with all their deliberate anachronisms, capture his brilliance and high spirits, but add to his silvery gaiety a note of Broadway brass.

HORACE

⁂ The first three books of the *Odes* were published together in 23 B.C. Book IV was published only five years before Horace's death in 8 B.C. The paraphrase of Ode 5, Book I, is by the late Professor Lewis Freeman Mott, that of Ode 30, Book III, is by Franklin P. Adams, all the other translations are by Louis Untermeyer ⁂

BOOK I, ODE 5. *QUIS MULTA GRACILIS*

He Thanks Heaven That He Has Gotten Past the Nonsense of Love

What slim, unthinking youth amid the roses
 Under the maple where the hedge is thickest
Pants, Pyrrha, smitten silly by your glances,
 Vamped by your purring?

Who is it now for whom your frocks are rustling,
Tastefully swell? Soon he, alas, poor booby,
Will wail and curse and raise the very devil
 Because he's jilted;

Because his train, which ran along so smoothly,
Slam-bang! plunged off the track and hurled the dreamer
Into a corn field on his head amongst the
 Other fat pumpkins.

And I?—I've dropped such nonsense now, thank Fortune!
Smash-ups are past for me. Grateful for safety,
I'll will my spare change to the broken-hearted
 To build a mad-house.

BOOK I, ODE 25. *PARCIUS IUNCTAS QUATIUNT FENESTRAS*

Not Altogether Kindly, He Reminds Lydia That Young Men Are Passing Her By

No longer now do perfumed swains and merry wanton youths
Come flocking, loudly knocking at your gate;
No longer do they rob your rest, or mar the sleep that soothes
With calling,–bawling love-songs until late.

No longer need you bar them out, nor is your window-pane
Ever shaken, now forsaken here you lie.
Nevermore will lute strings woo you, nor your lover's voice
complain,
" 'Tis a sin, dear, let me in, dear, or I die!"

The little door that used to swing so gaily in and out,
Creaks on hinges that show tinges of decay.
For you are old, my Lydia, you are old and rather stout;
Not the sort to court or sport with those who play.

Oh now you will bewail the daring insolence of rakes,
While you dally in the alley with the crones,
And the Thracian wind goes howling down the avenue and shakes
Your old shutters, as it utters mocking moans.

For youth will always call to youth and greet love with a will—
And Winter, though you tint her like the Spring,
Beneath the artificial glow she will be Winter still—
And who would hold so cold and old a thing!

BOOK II, ODE 4. *NE SIT ANCILLAE*

He Teases Xanthias About His New Girl Friend

You never need blush, since your love for a hand-maid,
Friend Xanthias, is known to—well, more than a few.
Conceal it no more. Here's a girl who is planned, made
And fashioned for you.

Briseis, the slave-girl, with tints like the lily's,
Her body a mingling of fire and snow,
Enraptured the noble and haughty Achilles—
A thing that you know.

And Ajax, the fearless and well-known defier,
Was snared by Tecmessa, the modest and grave;
Though he was a lord who could surely look higher,
And she was his slave.

And as for your Phyllis who scorns your sesterces,
Her family tree may be broad as an oak's.
Her people, I'm sure, though upset by reverses,
Were eminent folks.

A girl so devoted, unlike any other
Your arm may have had the occasion to crush,
Could never, believe me, be born of a mother
For whom you need blush.

Her arms and the turn of her ankles enthuse me;
Her face has the glamour that all men adore.
What! Jealous? You mean it? Go on—you amuse me!
I'm forty—and more.

BOOK II, ODE *11. QUID BELLICOSUS*

He Suggests Having Some Fun While We're Still Able

Why all these questions that worry and weary us?
Let's drop the serious rôle for a while.
Youth, with smooth cheeks, will be laughing behind us,
Age will not mind us; the cynic—he'll smile.

Come, for the gray hairs already are fretting us;
Girls are forgetting us. Lord, how we've got!
Come, let's convince them our blood is—well, red yet.
We are not dead yet. Let's show them we're not!

Yes, we'll have cups till you can't keep a count of them;
Any amount of them—hundreds, at least.
I'll have the table all tempting and tidy—
And we'll get Lyde to come to the feast!

BOOK III, ODE 9 *DONEC GRATUS ERAM TIBI*

Horace and Lydia Decide the Old Love's Better Than the New

HORACE

Once (even twice) your arms to me would cling,
Before your heart made various excursions;
And I was happier than the happiest king
Of all the Persians.

LYDIA

So long as I remained your constant flame,
I was a proud and rather well-sung Lydia,
But now, in spite of all your precious fame,
I'm glad I'm rid o' ye.

HORACE

Ah well, I've Chloe for my present queen.
Her voice would thrill the marble bust of Caesar;
And I would exit gladly from the scene
If it would please her.

LYDIA

And as for me, with every burning breath,
I think of Calaïs, my handsome lover,
For him not only would I suffer death,
But die twice over.

HORACE

What if the old love were to come once more
With smiling face and understanding tacit;
If Chloë went, and I'd unbar the door,
Would you—er—pass it?

LYDIA

Though he's a star that's constant, fair and true,
And you're as light as cork or wild as fever,
With all your faults I'd live and die with you,
You old deceiver!

BOOK III, ODE 15. *UXOR PAUPERIS IBYCI*

He Tells a Matron to Be Her Age

Wife of poor Ibycus, listen; a word with you.
How can you seem so outrageously gay?
Think of your age! It is sad and absurd, with you
Acting this way.

Truly, old lady, it's time that you ceased all this;
Here, with young girls, you should never be found.
Stop those ridiculous antics; at least all this
Running around.

It's all very well for a kitten like Pholoe
To smile at the lads who repay her in kind,
But when *you* approach them, they rapidly stroll away—
Lord, are you blind!

Strange, you won't see that the thing which delights a man
Is always the dancer and seldom the dance,
A Thyiad with white hair and wrinkles affrights a man;
He looks askance.

Roses and romance and wine-jars are *not* for you;
There is the loom and the raw wool to comb,
Mending and baking and—oh, there's a lot for you
Right here at home!

BOOK III, ODE 30. *EXEGI MONUMENTUM AERE PERENNIS*

He Advances His Modest Boast to Fame

The monument that I have built is durable as brass
And loftier than the Pyramids which mock the years that pass.
Nor blizzard can destroy it, nor furious rain corrode—
Remember, I'm the bard that built the first Horatian ode.

I shall not altogether die; a part of me's immortal.
A part of me shall never pass the mortuary portal;
And when I die my fame shall stand the nitric test of time—
The fame of me of lowly birth, who built the lofty rhyme.

Ay, fame shall be my portion when no trace there is of me,
For I first made Aeolian songs the songs of Italy.
Accept, I pray, Melpomene, my modest meed of praise,
And crown my thinning, graying locks with wreaths of
Delphic bays.

BOOK IV, ODE 13. *AUDIVERE, LYCE*

He Taunts an Aging Siren on the Loss of Her Charms

The gods have heard me, Lyce,
The gods have heard my prayer.
Now you, who were so icy,
Observe with cold despair
Your thin and snowy hair.

Your cheeks are lined and sunken;
Your smiles have turned to leers;
But still you sing, a drunken
Appeal to Love, who hears
With inattentive ears.

Young Chia, with her fluty
Caressing voice compels.
Love lives upon her beauty;
Her cheeks, in which He dwells,
Are His fresh citadels.

He saw the battered ruin,
This old and twisted tree;
He marked the scars, and flew in
Haste that He might not see
Your torn senility.

No silks, no purple gauzes
    Can hide the lines that last.
Time, with his iron laws, is
    Implacable and fast.
    You cannot cheat the past.

Where now are all your subtle
    Disguises and your fair
Smile like a gleaming shuttle?
    Your shining skin, your rare
    Beauty half-breathless—where?

Only excelled by Cinara,
    Your loveliness ranked high.
You even seemed the winner, a
    Victor as years went by,
    And she was first to die.

But now—the young men lightly
    Laugh at your wrinkled brow.
The torch that burned so brightly
    Is only ashes now;
    A charred and blackened bough.

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of a gentleman and mingled with the other men of letters of his time; he studied rhetoric at Rome and numbered Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius among his friends. Like Byron, he wrote with facility and exuberance, rather loosely, but brilliantly, gaily, colorfully: poems rich in romantic settings, agleam with a graceless wit and daring cynicism that startled even the sophisticated. Like Byron, he made a sensation with his highly spiced poetic narratives; he moved in fashionable society with the Emperor's daughter, a dashing figure in the fast set that Augustus regarded with louring disapproval. Like Byron, finally, during his last eight years he lived in exile from his native land. Augustus banished him to the half-Greek, half-barbaric town of Tomi, near the mouth of the Danube.

He had probably devised some political excuse. It was not easy, even for the Emperor, to attack the clever poet who was society's pet for mere urbane immorality. Ovid's poetry, however, has none of those political overtones that sound recurrent trumpet notes through Byron no paeans to liberty, no blasts of indignation against oppression and tyranny, no ringing summons to a nation to restore its ancient freedoms. And there was in Ovid none of that fierce rebellion against the world which made Byron beat against the bars of life like a caged eagle and distil a Weltschmerz *black with bitterness. The two other strands in Byron's complex nature were those Ovid shared: the love of nature and the wittily ironic view of man. No other writer of the ancient world comes nearer than Ovid to conveying the feeling for blue waves and green forest shades and high mountains and glassy lakes that we find in* Childe Harold *And none more sparklingly anticipates the daring and vivacity that make* Don Juan *a fireworks display of wit.*

Ovid's satire perhaps cut deeper than he knew. His Art of Love *is all rainbow hues and dancing light. No one cares less than Ovid that he reveals women as vain, silly, sensual, and yielding, or men as predatory lechers and liars. The society of which he makes himself the laureate is as elegant, flippant, and heartless as any conceived in the pages of Carl Van Vechten or Ronald Firbank. Ovid has none of their preciosity, but he has all their indifference. An element in his persuasiveness, indeed, is that he so casually takes the superficiality and selfishness of society for granted, and that he doesn't care, he isn't trying to convince us of anything, he is merely painting the world he knows. It is the satire of a moral nihilism, and it strips bare an age.*

It is only Ovid's laughing candor, of course, that is revelatory in this

way; the stratagems he outlines are timeless. The gallant at the Hippodrome or Circus who uses the pretext of brushing dust from his lady's gown to caress her thigh did not die with ancient Rome. The counsels on the handicaps of bad breath and underarm perspiration might have inspired the deodorant and mouth-wash ads. We may easily forget that we are reading of a society two thousand years past, and imagine ourselves in London or New York or Hollywood. The world Ovid has preserved in such lively colors is as ephemeral as the dance of insects or the winking of a bubble in the water, and it is as eternal as human triviality and vanity.

THE ART OF LOVE

««« The *Ars Amatoria* first appeared in 2 B.C. Augustus was incensed by it, and even the lax public opinion of Rome was shocked. The translation used in the following selections was made by John Dryden »»»

Ovid Offers the Would-Be Rake a Variety of Devices for Snaring the Girls

YOUNG nobles, to my laws attention lend,
And all you vulgar of my School attend.
First then believe, all women may be won:
Attempt with confidence, the work is done.
The grasshopper shall first forbear to sing
In summer season, or the birds in spring,
Than women can resist your flattering skill:
Even she will yield who swears she never will.
To secret pleasure both the sexes move,
But women most, who most dissemble love.

All women are content that men should woo,
She who complains, and she who will not do.
Rest then secure, whate'er thy luck may prove,
Not to be hated for declaring love.
And yet how canst thou miss, since womankind
Is frail and vain and still to change inclined?
Old husbands and stale gallants they despise,
And more another's than their own they prize.
A larger crop adorns our neighbor's field;
More milk his cows from swelling udders yield.
First gain the servant· by her thou art sure
A free access and easy, to procure.
Who knows what to her office does belong
Is in the secret and can hold her tongue.
Bribe her with gifts, with promises, and prayers,

For her good word goes far in love affairs.
The time and fit occasion leave to her,
When she most aptly can thy suit prefer.
The times for maids to fire their lady's blood
Is when they find her in a merry mood,
When all things at her wish and pleasure move:
Her heart is open then, and free to love.
Then mirth and wantonness to lust betray,
And smooth the passage to the lover's way.
Troy stood the siege, when filled with anxious care:
One merry mood concluded all the War.
  If some fair rival vex her jealous mind,
Offer thy service to revenge in kind;
Instruct the damsel, while she combs her hair,
To raise the choler of the injured fair,
And sighing, make her mistress understand
She has the means of vengeance in her hand.
Then, naming thee, thy humble suit prefer,
And swear thou languishest and diest for her.
Then let her lose no time, but push at all,
For women soon are raised and soon they fall.
Give their first fury leisure to relent,
They melt like ice, and suddenly repent.
  T' enjoy the maid, will that thy suit advance?
'Tis a hard question, and a doubtful chance.
One maid, corrupted, bawds the better for 't;
Another for herself will keep the sport.
Thy business may be furthered or delayed,
But by my counsel, let alone the maid;
Even though she should consent to do the feat,
The profit's little and the danger great.
I will not lead thee through a rugged road,
But where the way lies open, safe, and broad.
Yet if thou findst her very much thy friend,
And her good face her diligence commend,
Let the fair mistress have thy first embrace,
And let the maid come after in her place.
  But this I will advise, and mark my words,
For 'tis the best advice my skill affords,
If needs thou with the damsel must begin,
Before the attempt is made, make sure to win,

For then the secret will be better kept,
And she can tell no tales when once she's dipt.
'Tis for the fowler's interest to beware,
The bird entangled should not scape the snare.
The fish, once pricked, avoids the bearded hook,
And spoils the sport of all the neighboring brook.
But if the wench be thine, she makes the way,
And for thy sake, her mistress will betray,
Tell all she knows, and all she hears her say.

Buy not thy first enjoyment, lest it prove
Of bad example to thy future love,
But get it gratis; and she'll give thee more
For fear of losing what she gave before:
The losing gamester shakes the box, in vain,
And bleeds, and loses on, in hopes to gain.

Act well the lover, let thy speech abound
In dying words that represent thy wound.
Distrust not her belief, she will be moved:
All women think they merit to be loved.
Sometimes a man begins to love in jest,
And, after, feels the torments he professed.
For your own sakes, be pitiful, ye fair;
For a feigned passion may a true prepare.
By flatteries we prevail on womankind,
As hollow banks by streams are undermined.
Tell her her face is fair, her eyes are sweet,
Her taper fingers praise, and little feet . . .
Jove sits above, forgiving with a smile
The perjuries that easy maids beguile.

A rightful doom, the laws of nature cry,
'Tis, the artificers of death should die·
Thus justly women suffer by deceit;
Their practice authorizes us to cheat.
Beg her with tears thy warm desires to grant,
For tears will pierce a heart of adamant;
If tears will not be squeezed, then rub your eye,
Or 'noint the lids, and seem at least to cry.
Kiss, if you can: Resistance if she make,

And will not give you kisses, let her take.
"Fie, fie, you naughty man," are words, of course;
She struggles but to be subdued by force.
Kiss only soft, I charge you, and beware
With your hard bristles not to brush the fair.
He who has gained a kiss, and gains no more,
Deserves to lose the bliss he got before.
If once she kissed, her meaning is expressed;
There wants but little pushing for the rest . . .
Perhaps she calls it force, but if she scape
She will not thank you for the omitted rape.
The sex is cunning to conceal their fires;
They would be forced, even to their own desires.
They seem to accuse you with a downcast sight,
But in their souls confess you did them right.
Who might be forced, and yet untouched depart,
Thank *with their tongues, but curse you in their heart.*

This is the sex; they will not first begin,
But, when compelled, are pleased to suffer sin.
Is there who thinks that women first should woo,
Lay by thy self-conceit, thou foolish beau.
Begin, and save their modesty the shame;
'Tis well for thee if they receive thy flame,
'Tis decent for a man to speak his mind,
They but expect the occasion to be kind.
Ask, that thou mayst enjoy; she waits for this,
And on thy first advance depends thy bliss. . . .
But if you find your prayers increase her pride,
Strike sail awhile, and wait another tide.
They fly when we pursue; but make delay,
And when they see you slacken, they will stay.
Sometimes it profits to conceal your end;
Name not yourself her lover, but her friend.
How many skittish girls have thus been caught?
He proved a lover who a friend was thought.

Here I had ended, but experience finds
That sundry women are of sundry minds,
With various crotchets filled, and hard to please:
They therefore must be caught by various ways. . . .

So turn thyself, and imitating them,
Try several tricks, and change thy stratagem.
One rule will not for different ages hold
The jades grow cunning as they grow more old.
Then talk not bawdy to the bashful maid;
Bug words will make her innocence afraid.
Nor to an ignorant girl of learning speak;
She thinks you conjure when you talk in Greek.
And hence 'tis often seen, the simple shun
The learned, and into vile embraces run.
Part of my task is done, and part to do,
But here 'tis time to rest myself and you.

JUVENAL: THUNDER OVER ROME



NO OTHER *period of the ancient world seems nearer to the present than the time of Juvenal. Since the age of Augustus, the Empire had grown until its polyglot ring of conquests and dependencies embraced almost all the known civilized world, beyond was only barbarism in the misty reaches of Tartar plains and German forests or the remote Oriental realms of India and China. It was vaster than the British Empire; its wealth was enormous; its culture an elaborate mingling of elements from Greece, Parthia, Syria, Egypt, almost as complex as the internationalism of modern civilization.*

Rome stood on its seven hills, with theaters, temples, amphitheaters and hippodromes, tremendous public baths supplied with thousands of gallons of water carried on stone aqueducts from hundreds of miles away, with imperial palaces and innumerable private palaces and slums of tenements ten stories high; with a population of aristocrats, new millionaires, speculators and plungers, middle-class citizens, shopkeepers, artisans, administrative officials and countless clerks in government bureaus, slaves, courtesans, actors, poets, dancers, philosophers, jugglers, singers, fortune-tellers, hoodlums, robbers, centurions; with silken pomp and marble luxury jostling vice and poverty. It was the center and capital—the New York and Paris and London and Washington combined—of the world.

The city that Juvenal paints is the very world of the modern metropolis.

Juvenal

It would not be hard to picture Petronius in our urban nightclubs, and Trimalchio's banquet sounds like some of those bloated festivities of the American Gilded Age described by Beard's Rise of American Civilization and not unlike the coming-out glitter of Brenda Frazier in the depths of the Depression. Walter Winchell would have felt at home with Suetonius, Aldous Huxley castigating society with angry ferocity is but Juvenal in modern dress. How little difference there is, deep down, between the Rome of Trajan and Hadrian and the scenes of many modern novels The Big Money, The Sun Also Rises, Point Counter Point, The Web and the Rock. Brett Ashley would only be passing from matadors at Pamplona to gladiators at the Coliseum; imagination moves fluidly from Poppaea in a Hollywood scandal to Lucy Tantamount sharing a bordello with Messalina, or Margo Dowling in a Tiberian orgy at Capri.

Juvenal looks upon this world of extravagant indulgence and corruption with the censorious eye of a Cato and portrays it with the violence and bitterness of an Isaiah. His grim puritanism sees it as a vast melting pot in which the vilest scum rises to the surface. Deceit, luxury, greed, lust, sycophancy, perversion, scorn of the old republican virtues, extremes of wealth and poverty, violence, crime—he surveys the scene, and his indignation boils over. Virgil had exulted over a Rome transformed from a city of brick to one of marble, and over an urbanity of polite accomplishments; in Virgil's own words Juvenal retorted, "Easy is the descent into Avernus." It is in a tone of nauseated horror that he describes the Roman empress stealing from the bed of her imperial spouse and seeking the brothel:

> Prepared for fight, expectingly she lies,
> With heaving breasts, and with desiring eyes.
> Still as one drops another takes his place,
> And baffled still succeeds to like disgrace—

then returning unsatisfied at dawn:

> All filth without, and all afire within,
> Tired with the toil, unsated with the sin,
> Old Caesar's bed the modest matron seeks,
> The steam of lamps still hanging on her cheeks
> In ropy smut.

The indictment rolls on in a series of images that burn.

Technically, Juvenal's procedure is about as complicated as knocking

the reader down and burying him beneath a drayload of muck. There is a kind of serious wit, occasionally, in the comparison of objects with different associations (Imperial Rome = a foul sewer), and a half-nauseated comedy in some of the pictures:

> *She duly, once a month, renews her face;*
> *Meantime, it lies in daub, and hid in grease:*
> *Those are the husband's nights; she craves her due,*
> *He takes fat kisses, and is stuck in glue.*

But in general, Juvenal just states the vices he sees around him with such loathsome vividness that the effect is one long vituperation. He gives no evidence that he speaks the truth, no reasoned indictment; only a violence that produces belief and a circumstantial recitation that compels surrender. We do not ask, "Is this so?"—our eyes hasten over the corrupt panorama, and we yield.

Our confidence in Juvenal springs mainly from a sense of the courage and moral integrity required to risk the penalties of such openness. It may have been, of course, that in the cosmopolitan society of Rome he needed to fear no more than sneers and social ostracism, that those he lashed could ignore him as a crabbed and narrow-minded reactionary. Perhaps his attack could be laughed off with the flouts and penalties reserved for those who purport to be better than their neighbors. But to face even these requires some fortitude. And there is a tradition that Juvenal's allusions to the actor Paris, once a favorite under Domitian, were resented as an indirect personal attack by an actor at the court of Hadrian, and that in retaliation Juvenal was exiled to Egypt, where he died. Whether the story is true or false, Juvenal must always have known that someday he might go too far or tolerance vanish in an imperial caprice:

> *The hearer, cold with crime before, grows red,*
> *And brimming with his secret guilt, damp fears*
> *Distil in clammy sweat: Hence, wrath and tears.*

Some protective devices Juvenal does employ. His examples, he announced in the First Satire, would be gathered not from the living, but the dead. And the corruption he lashes is not native, he says, to Rome, but is an infection from the deceitful and effeminate Greeks. Aping the vices of the vanquished, the Romans are not very good at it, being naturally too straightforward and virile: no matter how hard they try, they are still sur-

passed by the Greeks in sycophancy, pimping, and perversion. Here's inverse glory for you!

Our belief in Juvenal's essential veracity establishes certain conditions governing the effectiveness of his method. For almost any other circumstances than those he deals with, the brimstone and lava of his utterance would seem overdone. Volcanoes should not erupt to destroy bedbugs or butterflies; nothing less than Sodom and Gomorrah should call down fire from heaven. Juvenal's fury is appropriate only to great, obvious, and widespread evils, the very putrefaction of society. Partly Juvenal's strength lies in the power of the thwarted emotion that, half Periclean lover, half Timon, he felt for Rome the patriotism that longed to see the antique virtues restored. But even more it lies in the magnitude, force, and integrity of judgment he brought to the mighty denunciation that was his theme.

THE THIRD SATIRE

««« The first five of Juvenal's satires were published together some time after A.D. 96 The translation used here is a fusion of two translations, one by John Dryden, the other by William Gifford, with perhaps a dozen lines by the editor »»»

Umbricius, Departing for Cumae, Denounces All the Vices of the Metropolis

Grieved though I am to lose an ancient friend,
When I reflect, my judgment must commend
His purpose, to retire from noisy Rome
And find on Cumae's shores a peaceful home.
Right on the road to Baiae, Cumae lies,
And many a sweet retreat her coast supplies—
Though I prefer even some barren strand
To rows of mansions; and what desert land
More fearful can be found than Rome alight
With conflagrations roaring through each night,
Houses with ceaseless ruin thundering down,
And all the horrors of this hateful town? . . .
Now had my friend, impatient to depart,
Consigned his little all to one poor cart,
For this, without the town, he chose to wait,
But stopped a moment at the Conduit-Gate. . . .
Then thus Umbricius, with an angry frown
And looking back on this degenerate town:
"Since noble arts in Rome have no support
And ragged virtues not a friend at court,
'Tis time to give my just disdain a vent
And, cursing, leave so base a government.
"What's Rome to me, what business have I there,
I who can neither lie nor falsely swear?
Nor praise my patron's undeserving rhymes
Nor yet comply with him nor with his times?
Unskilled in schemes by planets to foreshow,
Like canting rascals, how the wars will go,

I neither will nor can prognosticate
To the young gaping heir his father's fate;
Nor in the entrails of a toad have pried,
Nor carried bawdy presents to a bride:
For want of these town-virtues, thus, alone,
I go conducted on my way by none.
"Who is now loved but he who loves the times,
Conscious of close intrigues and dipped in crimes,
Laboring with secrets which his bosom burn,
Yet never must to public light return?
They get reward alone who can betray:
For keeping honest counsels none will pay. . . .
"I cannot rule my spleen, and calmly see
This Grecian filth smeared over Italy!
Grecian? Oho! the foul smell of this vast
Sewer leaves the very dregs of Greece surpassed.
Long since the stream that wanton Syria laves
Has vomited its slime in Tiber's waves,
Its art and language, drowned us in the scum
Of Antioch's streets, its minstrel, harp, and drum.
Hie to the Circus! ye who pant to lace
Barbarian harlots in a strange embrace.
Hie to the Circus! there in crowds they stand,
Paint on their faces, timbrels in their hand.
"Your herdsman primitive, your homely clown,
Is turned a *Beau*, in a loose, tawdry gown,
His once unkempt and horrid locks behold
Perfumed and oiled, his neck enchained with gold,
Aping the foreigners; while every land,
Sicyon, and Amydon, and Alaband,
Tralles, and Samos, and a thousand more,
Thrive on his indolence, and daily pour
Their starving myriads forth: They batten here,
And, soon as denizened, they domineer;
Grow to the great a flattering servile rout,
Work themselves in, and then their patrons out;
A brazen, cringing, treacherous, artful race,

Of torrent tongue, and never-blushing face.
Riddle me this, and guess him if you can,
Who bears a nation in a single man?
A cook, a conjuror, a rhetorician,
A painter, pedant, poet, geometrician,
Rope-dancer, fiddler, augur, and physician?
All trades his own your hungry Greekling counts;
And bid him mount the sky—the sky he mounts! . . .
"How little is the privilege become
Of being born a citizen of Rome!
The Greeks get all by fulsome flatteries;
A most peculiar stroke they have at lies.
They make a wit of their insipid friend,
His blubber-lips and beetle-brow commend,
His long crane-neck and narrow shoulders praise:
You'd think they were describing Hercules.
A creaking voice for a clear treble goes,
Though harsher than a cock that treads and crows.
"We can as grossly praise, but to our grief,
No flattery but from Grecians gains belief.
See! they step forth and mimic to the life
The naked nymph, the mistress, or the wife,
So just, you view the very woman there,
And fancy all beneath the girdle bare!
All Greece is one comedian: Laugh, and they
Return it louder than an ass can bray;
Grieve, and they grieve; in silent sorrow lie,
There seems a silent echo in their eye.
Call for a fire, their winter clothes they take;
Begin but you to shiver, and they shake;
In frost and snow, if you complain of heat,
They rub the unsweating brow and swear they sweat.
Even nastiness, occasions will afford:
They praise a belching or well-pissing lord.
Besides, there's nothing sacred, nothing free
From bold attempts of their rank lechery.
Through the whole family their labors run;
The daughter is debauched, the wife is won,
Nor 'scapes the bridegroom, nor the blooming son;
And, these being absent, they will even take
The grand-dam, and an aged strumpet make. . . .

"Produce a witness of unblemished life,
Holy as Numa, or as Numa's wife,
Or him who bid the unhallowed flames retire
And snatched the trembling goddess from the fire.
The question is not put how far extends
His piety, but what he yearly spends—
Quick, to the business, how he lives and eats,
How largely gives, how splendidly he treats,
How many thousand acres feed his sheep,
What are his rents, what servants does he keep?
These weighty matters known, his faith they rate,
And swear his probity to his estate.
"Swear by our Gods, or those the Greeks adore,
You are as sure forsworn as you are poor;
The poor must gain their bread by perjury,
And even the Gods, that other means deny,
In conscience must absolve them when they lie.
Add that the rich have still a jibe in store,
And will be monstrous witty on the poor
If through the bursting shoe the foot is seen
Or the coarse seam tell where the rent has been.
Want is the scorn of every wealthy fool,
And wit in rags is turned to ridicule.

"There's many a part of Italy, it's said,
Where none assume the toga but the dead.
On theatres of turf in homely state
Old plays they act, old feasts they celebrate;
The same rude song returns upon the crowd
And by tradition is for wit allowed;
While the pale infant, of the mask in dread,
Hides in his mother's breast his little head.
In his white cloak the magistrate appears;
The country bumpkin the same garment wears.
But here, attired beyond our purse we go
For useless ornaments and flaunting show.
We take on trust, in purple robes to shine,
And, poor, are yet ambitious to be fine.
Such is the reigning vice; and so we flaunt,
Proud in distress and prodigal in want!
Briefly, my friend, here all are slaves to gold,

And words, and smiles, and everything is sold.
What will you give for Cossus' nod? how high
The silent notice of Veiento buy?
By how much swell the minion's ample hoard
And bribe the page, for leave to bribe his lord?

"Who fears in country towns a house's fall,
Or to be caught betwixt a riven wall?
But we inhabit a weak city here,
Which buttresses and props can hardly bear,
And it is the humble mason's daily calling
To keep the world's metropolis from falling,
To clean the gutters, and the chinks to close,
And, for one night, secure his lord's repose.
At Cumae we can sleep quite round the year,
Nor falls nor fires nor nightly dangers fear,
While rolling flames from Roman towers fly
And the pale citizens for buckets cry. . . .
" 'Codrus had but one bed, and that too short
For his short wife'; his goods, of every sort,
Were else but few:—six little pipkins graced
His cupboard head, a little can was placed
On a snug shelf beneath, and near it lay
A Chiron of the same cheap marble—clay.
'Codrus, in short, had nothing.' You say true;
And yet poor Codrus lost that nothing too!
One curse alone was wanting to complete
His woes, that cold and hungry through the street
The wretch should beg, and in the hour of need
Find none to lodge, to clothe him, or to feed!

"But should the raging flames on grandeur prey,
And low in dust Asturius' palace lay,
The squalid matron sighs, the senate mourns,
The pleaders cease, the judge the court adjourns;
All join to wail the city's hapless fate,
And rail at fire with more than common hate.
Lo! while it burns, obsequious courtiers haste,
With rich materials, to repair the waste.
This, brings him marble; that, a finished piece,
The far-famed boast of Polyclete and Greece;
This, ornaments, which graced of old the fane

Of Asia's gods, that, figured plate and plain;
This, cases, books, and busts, the shelves to grace,
And piles of coin his specie to replace.
Childless Asturius, vastly rich before,
Thus by his losses multiplies his store—
Suspected for accomplice to the fire
That burnt his palace but to build it higher.

"But, could you be content to bid adieu
To the dear playhouse, and the players too,
Sweet country seats are purchased everywhere,
With lands and gardens, at less price than here
You hire a darksome doghole by the year.
A shallow well may in your yard be found,
That spreads its easy crystal streams around
And waters all the pretty spot of ground.
There, love the pitchfork, raise garden greens,
And give your friends a frugal meal of beans.
And, sure, in any corner we can get,
To call one lizard ours is something yet!
"It's frequent here, for want of sleep to die,
Which fumes of undigested feasts deny:
What house secure from noise can the poor keep
When even the rich can scarce afford to sleep?
So dear it costs to purchase rest in Rome,
And hence the sources of diseases come.
The drover who his fellow drover meets
In narrow passages of winding streets,
The waggoners that curse their standing teams,
Would wake even drowsy Drusus from his dreams.
And yet the wealthy will not brook delay,
But sweep above our heads and make their way
In lofty litters borne, and read or write
Or sleep at ease: The shutters make it night.
Yet reach they first the goal; while by the throng
Elbowed and jostled, we scarce creep along;
Sharp strokes from poles, tubs, rafters, doomed to feel;
And plastered over with mud from head to heel,
While the rude soldier gores us as he goes
Or marks in blood his progress on our toes.
"See, from the Dole, a vast tumultuous throng,
Each followed by his kitchen, pours along.

Huge pans, which Corbulo could scarce uprear,
With steady neck a puny slave must bear,
And lest amid the way the flames expire,
Glide nimbly on, and gliding, fan the fire;
Through the close press with sinuous efforts wind
And, piece by piece, leave his botched rags behind.
Hark! groaning on, the unwieldy wagon spreads
Its cumbrous load, tremendous, o'er our heads,
Projecting elm or pine, that nods on high,
And threatens death to every passer-by.
Heavens! should the axle crack, which bears a weight
Of huge Ligurian stone, and pour the freight
On the pale crowd beneath, what would remain
But a mashed heap, a hotchpotch of the slain? . . .
"Pass we these fearful dangers, and survey
What other evils threat our nightly way.
And first, behold the mansion's towering size,
Where floors on floors to the tenth story rise,
Whence heedless garreteers their potsherds throw,
And crush the unwary wretch that walks below.
Clattering the storm descends from heights unknown,
Plows up the street and wounds the flinty stone.
It's madness, dire improvidence of ill,
To sup abroad before you've signed your will,
Since fate in ambush lies, and marks his prey
From every wakeful window on the way.
Pray, then,—and count your humble prayer well sped
If pots be only—emptied, on your head.
"The drunken bully, ere his man be slain,
Frets through the night and courts repose in vain,
And while the thirst of blood his bosom burns,
From side to side, in restless anguish turns.
Yet though his youthful blood be fired with wine
He wants not wit a danger to decline:
Is cautious to avoid the coach and six,
And on the lackeys will no quarrel fix.
His train of flambeaux and embroidered coat
May privilege my lord to walk secure on foot,
But me, who must by moonlight homeward bend,
Or lighted only by a candle-end,
Poor me he fights, if that be fighting where

He only cudgels and I only bear.
He stands, and bids me stand: I must abide,
For he's the stronger, and is drunk beside.
"'Whence come you, rogue?' he cries; 'whose beans tonight
Have stuffed you thus? what cobbler clubbed his mite
For leeks and sheep's-head porridge? Are you dumb?
Speak or be kicked! Yet once again! your home?
Say, in what nasty cellar underground
Or temple-door your rogueship may be found?'
Answer, or answer not, it's all the same:
He lays me on, and makes me bear the blame.
Before the bar, for beating him, you come:
This is a poor man's liberty, in Rome. . . .

"Nor is this all; for when retired, you think
To sleep securely, when the candles wink,
When every door with iron chains is barred
And roaring taverns are no longer heard,
The ruffian robbers, by no justice awed,
And unpaid cut-throat soldiers are abroad.
Roused from our slumberous couch, aghast, we start,
And the fleshed sword—is buried in our heart.
Chased from their woods and bogs, the padders come
To this vast city, as their native home,
To live at ease, and safely skulk at Rome.
O! happy were our sires, estranged from crimes,
And happy, happy, were the good old times,
Which saw one jail those criminals restrain
Which now the walls of Rome can scarce contain.

"More could I say, more causes could I show
For my departure, but the sun is low.
The waggoner grows weary of my stay
And whips his horses forward on their way.
Farewell; and when like me o'erwhelmed with care
You to your own Aquinum shall repair,
Be mindful of your friend, and send me word
What joys your fountains and cool shades afford.
Then to assist your satires I will come,
And add new venom when you write of Rome."

THE LAUGHING PYRRHONISM OF LUCIAN



UNDER THE Antonines, the Roman Empire achieved its greatest *fullness of ease and prosperity. Save for sporadic clashes along the Rhine or the Danube it was at peace and had been at peace within its own borders for two hundred years. Its clear afternoon light was darkened by no shadow of breakdown or barbarism. Silk came from China, amber from the Baltic, furs from Scythia, carpets from Babylon. Libraries abounded; there were endowed professorships of the liberal arts in Rome and in the provinces; Byzantium, Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Syracuse, Alexandria were centers of learning. In vain had Juvenal denounced the Greeks: all the Roman world was being Hellenized Lucian, born in Samosata, was one of those Syrians whose moral character Juvenal had regarded as even more darkly suspicious, and his culture was entirely Grecian.*

But in reality nothing could be farther removed from licentiousness than the laughing pyrrhonism of Lucian. He is iconoclastic, not corrupt, all sunny high spirits and sweet-tempered mockery. His gaiety is both innocent and wise in the ways of the world· he is as free from evil design as a baby, as serene as a good digestion, and as twinklingly observant as some

genial deity watching the foolishness of men from an ironic heaven. But his Olympianism is not so much supercilious as sympathetic, an understanding without hate, an amusement without malice. Never self-righteous like Juvenal, his satire is all a quiet ripple of enjoyment, never a molten torrent of fury. He has the liveliness and lightness of Horace, but a stronger intellectual grasp in a wider philosophical universe.

Lucian traveled all over the Roman world. He knew Greece, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Italy, even Gaul. Himself a rhetorician and a student of philosophy, he twitted all the systems from Democritus to Pythagoras with an impartial delicate raillery; his Sale of the Philosophers *is a gay and completely good-humored parody of their doctrines. The* True Story *is an entertaining spoof on traveler's tales, and it started the imaginary voyage off on its long satiric journeyings to the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Venus, the center of the Earth, Cacklogallinia, Lilliputia, Erewhon, and many other strange places The* Dialogues of the Dead *are all ingenious insinuation, with human absurdities objectively revealed in speech and action, speaking for themselves so that we have at the same time to laugh and to admit their truth.*

In the same way, the Dialogues of the Gods *farcically delineate the inhabitants of Olympus, and simply by revealing their human-all-too-human frailty score off the conceptions of deity that men have chosen to worship. There is none of the bitter earnest of Euripides, who half hates still the gods in whom he does not believe For Lucian the gods are too assuredly nonexistent to be hated; their ever having been invented was only another of the follies of men, whom he now persuades to laugh at their own fantastic notions. The fun is sparkling and infectious, and it is intellectually annihilating. By the time Lucian has taken us through this hilariously subversive tour of Olympus, the gods have, as it were, been tickled to death and can hardly be taken seriously again.*

Lucian is in a way the Anatole France of the ancient world. He never attacks outright, he never preaches, denounces, or loses his own control He simply coaxes his victims into the position in which their weaknesses are most ludicrously clear, and then mischievously shows them to the world. He is a master of that kind of irony which does not state its meanings in words at all, not even words that are too mild, but merges them in situations whose airy humor half disguises the seriousness of its own implications He is forever, as it were, saying innocently, "Why, how can you imagine that this is anything but a pleasant jest, an entertaining fancy?"

It is exactly the tone of the heavenly symposium in Penguin Island, *or of Jacques Tournebroche reporting some pious sentiment of the Abbé* Coignard. *But Lucian has none of that slight intellectual preciosity with which France often seems to be trying at the same time to display his own erudition and to deprecate the vanity of pedantic scholarship.*

His learning is simply an easy part of Lucian, no more the means of self-display than his arms or his knees. The emotional and bodily entanglements of men and women he can regard with sympathy or laughter; but his imagination is not always leering down the hollow of a bosom or sniffing up ladies' lingerie in the way that sometimes makes France seem, for all his smiling wisdom, little more than a dirty-minded old man. Lucian is both a healthy and a civilized man, and it is his lively and flexible balance that makes us admire him. He is neither puritanical nor abandoned, libidinous nor prudish. He is a man of the world but not a cynic, and cultivated without being either an aesthete or a pundit. He has grace, wit, charm, verve, and a kind of enchanting happiness. He strips men's follies down to their naked truth and persuades us to laugh at the embarrassing denudation. For eighteen centuries he has been one of the world's voices of joy and sanity.

DIALOGUES OF THE GODS
DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD

*** Both these groups of dialogues date from about A.D. 165. The *Dialogues of the Gods* given here are numbers 15 and 20, the *Dialogues of the Dead* numbers 9 and 24. The translations are by H. W. Fowler (15, 9) and F. G. Fowler (20, 24) ***

A Little Envious Gossip in Heaven

HERMES AND APOLLO

HERMES. To think that a cripple and a blacksmith like him should marry two such queens of beauty as Aphrodite and Charis!

APOLLO. Luck, Hermes—that is all. But I do wonder at their putting up with his company; they see him running with sweat, bent over the forge, all sooty-faced; and yet they cuddle and kiss him, and sleep with him!

HERMES. Yes, it makes me angry too; how I envy him! Ah, Apollo, you may let your locks grow, and play your harp, and be proud of your looks; I am a healthy fellow, and can touch the lyre; but, when it comes to bed-time, we lie alone.

APOLLO. Well, my loves never prosper; Daphne and Hyacinth were my great passions; she so detested me that being turned to a tree was more attractive than I; and him I killed with a quoit. Nothing is left me of them but wreaths of their leaves and flowers.

HERMES. Ah, once, once, I and Aphrodite—but no; no boasting.

APOLLO. I know; that is how Hermaphroditus is accounted for. But perhaps you can tell me how it is that Aphrodite and Charis are not jealous of one another.

HERMES. Because one is his wife in Lemnus and the other in Heaven. Besides, Aphrodite cares most about Ares, he is her real love; so she does not trouble her head about the blacksmith.

APOLLO. Do you think Hephaestus sees?

HERMES. Oh, he sees, yes, but what can he do? he knows what a martial young fellow it is; so he holds his tongue. He talks of inventing a net, though, to take them in the act with.

APOLLO. Ah, all I know is, I would not mind being taken in that act.

Lucian

Three Divine Beauties Strive to Overreach One Another

ZEUS, HERMES, HERA, ATHENE, APHRODITE, AND PARIS

ZEUS. Hermes, take this apple, and go with it to Phrygia; on the Gargaran peak of Ida you will find Priam's son, the herdsman. Give him this message. "Paris, because you are handsome, and wise in the things of love, Zeus commands you to judge between the Goddesses, and say which is the most beautiful. And the prize shall be this apple."—Now, you three, there is no time to be lost: away with you to your judge. I will have nothing to do with the matter: I love you all exactly alike, and I only wish you could all three win. If I were to give the prize to one of you, the other two would hate me, of course. In these circumstances, I am ill qualified to be your judge. But this young Phrygian to whom you are going is of the royal blood—a relation of Ganymede's,—and at the same time a simple countryman; so that we need have no hesitation in trusting his eyes.

APHRODITE. As far as I am concerned, Zeus, Momus himself might be our judge, I should not be afraid to show myself. What fault could he find with me? But the others must agree too.

HERA. Oh, we are under no alarm, thank you,—though your admirer Ares should be appointed. But Paris will do, whoever Paris is.

ZEUS. And my little Athene, have we her approval? Nay, never blush, nor hide your face. Well, well, maidens will be coy; 'tis a delicate subject. But there, she nods consent. Now, off with you, and mind, the beaten ones must not be cross with the judge, I will not have the poor lad harmed. The prize of beauty can be but one.

HERMES. Now for Phrygia. I will show the way; keep close behind me, ladies, and don't be nervous. I know Paris well: he is a charming young man; a great gallant, and an admirable judge of beauty. Depend on it, he will make a good award.

APHRODITE. I am glad to hear that; I ask for nothing better than a just judge. —Has he a wife, Hermes, or is he a bachelor?

HERMES. Not exactly a bachelor.

APHRODITE. What do you mean?

HERMES. I believe there is a wife, as it were, a good enough sort of girl—a native of those parts—but sadly countrified! I fancy he does not care very much about her.—Why do you ask?

APHRODITE. I just wanted to know.

ATHENE. Now, Hermes, that is not fair. No whispering with Aphrodite.

HERMES. It was nothing, Athene; nothing about you. She only asked me whether Paris was a bachelor.

ATHENE. What business is that of hers?

HERMES. None that I know of. She meant nothing by the question; she just wanted to know.

ATHENE. Well, and is he?

HERMES. Why, no.

ATHENE. And does he care for military glory? has he ambition? or is he a mere neatherd?

HERMES. I couldn't say for certain. But he is a young man, so it is to be presumed that distinction on the field of battle is among his desires.

APHRODITE. There, you see; I don't complain; I say nothing when you whisper with her. Aphrodite is not so particular as some people.

HERMES. Athene asked me almost exactly the same as you did; so don't be cross. It will do you no harm, my answering a plain question.—Meanwhile, we have left the stars far behind us, and are almost over Phrygia. There is Ida· I can make out the peak of Gargarum quite plainly; and if I am not mistaken, there is Paris himself.

HERA. Where is he? I don't see him.

HERMES. Look over there to the left, Hera: not on the top, but down the side, by that cave where you see the herd.

HERA. But I *don't* see the herd.

HERMES. What, don't you see them coming out from between the rocks,—where I am pointing, look—and the man running down from the crag, and keeping them together with his staff?

HERA. I see him now, if he it is.

HERMES. Oh, that is Paris. But we are getting near; it is time to alight and walk. He might be frightened, if we were to descend upon him so suddenly.

HERA. Yes, very well. And now that we are on the earth, you might go on ahead, Aphrodite, and show us the way. You know the country, of course, having been here so often to see Anchises; or so I have heard.

APHRODITE. Your sneers are thrown away on me, Hera.

HERMES. Come; I'll lead the way myself. I spent some time on Ida, while Zeus was courting Ganymede. Many is the time that I have been sent here to keep watch over the boy, and when at last the eagle came, I flew by his side, and helped him with his lovely burden. This is the very rock, if I remember; yes, Ganymede was piping to his sheep, when down swooped the eagle behind him, and tenderly, oh, so tenderly, caught him up in those talons, and with the turban in his beak bore him off, the frightened boy straining his neck the while to see his captor. I picked up his pipes—he had dropped them in his fright—and—ah! here is our umpire, close at hand. Let us accost him.—Good-morrow, herdsman!

PARIS. Good-morrow, youngster. And who may you be, who come thus

far afield? And these dames? They are over comely, to be wandering on the mountain-side.

HERMES. "These dames," good Paris, are Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite; and I am Hermes, with a message from Zeus. Why so pale and tremulous? Compose yourself; there is nothing the matter. Zeus appoints you the judge of their beauty. "Because you are handsome, and wise in the things of love" (so runs the message) "I leave the decision to you; and for the prize,—read the inscription on the apple."

PARIS. Let me see what it is about. FOR THE FAIR, it says. But, my lord, Hermes, how shall a mortal and a rustic like myself be judge of such unparalleled beauty? This is no sight for a herdsman's eyes; let the fine city folk decide on such matters. As for me, I can tell you which of two goats is the fairer beast; or I can judge betwixt heifer and heifer;—'tis my trade. But here, where all are beautiful alike, I know not how a man may leave looking at one, to look upon another. Where my eyes fall, there they fasten,—for there is beauty: I move them, and what do I find? more loveliness! I am fixed again, yet distracted by neighbouring charms. I bathe in beauty: I am enthralled: ah, why am I not all eyes like Argus? Methinks it were a fair award, to give the apple to all three. Then again: one is the wife and sister of Zeus; the others are his daughters. Take it where you will, 'tis a hard matter to judge.

HERMES. So it is, Paris. At the same time—Zeus's orders! There is no way out of it.

PARIS. Well, please point out to them, Hermes, that the losers must not be angry with me; the fault will be in my eyes only.

HERMES. That is quite understood. And now to work.

PARIS. I must do what I can; there is no help for it. But first let me ask,—am I just to look at them as they are, or must I go into the matter thoroughly?

HERMES. That is for you to decide, in virtue of your office. You have only to give your orders; it is as you think best.

PARIS. As I think best? Then I will be thorough.

HERMES. Get ready, ladies. Now, Mr. Umpire.—I will look the other way.

HERA. I approve your decision, Paris. I will be the first to submit myself to your inspection. You shall see that I have more to boast of than white arms and large eyes: nought of me but is beautiful.

PARIS. Aphrodite, will you also prepare?

ATHENE. Oh, Paris,—make her take off that girdle, first, there is magic in it; she will bewitch you. For that matter, she has no right to come thus tricked out and painted,—just like a courtesan! She ought to show herself unadorned.

PARIS. They are right about the girdle, madam; it must go.

APHRODITE. Oh, very well, Athene: then take off that helmet, and show your head bare, instead of trying to intimidate the judge with that waving plume. I suppose you are afraid the colour of your eyes may be noticed, without their formidable surroundings.

ATHENE. Oh, here is my helmet.

APHRODITE. And here is my girdle.

HERA. Now then.

PARIS. God of wonders! What loveliness is here! Oh, rapture! How exquisite these maiden charms! How dazzling the majesty of Heaven's true queen! And oh, how sweet, how enthralling is Aphrodite's smile! 'Tis too much, too much of happiness.—But perhaps it would be well for me to view each in detail; for as yet I doubt, and know not where to look; my eyes are drawn all ways at once.

APHRODITE. Yes, that will be best.

PARIS. Withdraw then, you and Athene, and let Hera remain.

HERA. So be it; and when you have finished your scrutiny, you have next to consider, how you would like the present which I offer you. Paris, give me the prize of beauty, and you shall be lord of all Asia.

PARIS. I will take no presents. Withdraw. I shall judge as I think right. Approach, Athene.

ATHENE. Behold. And, Paris, if you will say I am the fairest, I will make you a great warrior and conqueror, and you shall always win, in every one of your battles.

PARIS. But I have nothing to do with fighting, Athene. As you see, there is peace throughout all Lydia and Phrygia, and my father's dominion is uncontested. But never mind: I am not going to take your present, but you shall have fair play. You can robe again and put on your helmet, I have seen. And now for Aphrodite.

APHRODITE. Here I am; take your time, and examine carefully; let nothing escape your vigilance. And I have something else to say to you, handsome Paris. Yes, you handsome boy, I have long had an eye on you, I think you must be the handsomest young fellow in all Phrygia. But it is such a pity that you don't leave these rocks and crags, and live in a town: you will lose all your beauty in this desert. What have you to do with mountains? What satisfaction can your beauty give to a lot of cows? You ought to have been married long ago; not to any of these dowdy women hereabouts, but to some Greek girl; an Argive, perhaps, or a Corinthian, or a Spartan; Helen, now, is a Spartan, and such a pretty girl—quite as pretty as I am—and so susceptible! Why, if she once caught sight of you, she would give up everything, I am sure, to go with you, and a most devoted wife she would be. But you have heard of Helen, of course?

PARIS. No, ma'am; but I should like to hear all about her now.

APHRODITE. Well, she is the daughter of Leda, the beautiful woman, you know, whom Zeus visited in the disguise of a swan.

PARIS. And what is she like?

APHRODITE. She is fair, as might be expected from the swan, soft as down (she was hatched from an egg, you know), and such a lithe, graceful figure; and only think, she is so much admired, that there was a war because Theseus ran away with her, and she was a mere child then. And when she grew up, the very first men in Greece were suitors for her hand, and she was given to Menelaus, who is descended from Pelops.—Now, if you like, she shall be your wife.

PARIS. What, when she is married already?

APHRODITE. Tut, child, you are a simpleton: I understand these things.

PARIS. I should like to understand them too.

APHRODITE. You will set out for Greece on a tour of inspection and when you get to Sparta, Helen will see you; and for the rest—her falling in love, and going back with you—that will be my affair.

PARIS. But that is what I cannot believe,—that she will forsake her husband to cross the seas with a stranger, a barbarian.

APHRODITE. Trust me for that. I have two beautiful children, Love and Desire. They shall be your guides. Love will assail her in all his might, and compel her to love you: Desire will encompass you about, and make you desirable and lovely as himself; and I will be there to help. I can get the Graces to come too, and between us we shall prevail.

PARIS. How this will end, I know not. All I do know is, that I am in love with Helen already. I see her before me—I sail for Greece—I am in Sparta—I am on my homeward journey, with her at my side! Ah, why is none of it true?

APHRODITE. Wait. Do not fall in love yet. You have first to secure my interest with the bride, by your award. The union must be graced with my victorious presence: your marriage-feast shall be my feast of victory. Love, beauty, wedlock; all these you may purchase at the price of yonder apple.

PARIS. But perhaps after the award you will forget all about me?

APHRODITE. Shall I swear?

PARIS. No; but promise once more.

APHRODITE. I promise that you shall have Helen to wife; that she shall follow you, and make Troy her home; and I will be present with you, and help you in all.

PARIS. And bring Love, and Desire, and the Graces?

APHRODITE. Assuredly; and Passion and Hymen as well.

PARIS. Take the apple: it is yours.

Old Polystratus Tells the Tender Passions He Inspired

SIMYLUS AND POLYSTRATUS

SIMYLUS. So here you are at last, Polystratus, you must be something very like a centenarian.

POLYSTRATUS. Ninety-eight.

SIMYLUS. And what sort of a life have you had of it, these thirty years? you were about seventy when I died.

POLYSTRATUS. Delightful, though you may find it hard to believe.

SIMYLUS. It is surprising that you could have any joy of your life—old, weak, and childless, moreover.

POLYSTRATUS. In the first place, I could do just what I liked; there were still plenty of handsome boys and dainty women; perfumes were sweet, wine kept its bouquet, Sicilian feasts were nothing to mine.

SIMYLUS. This is a change, to be sure; you were very economical in my day.

POLYSTRATUS. Ah, but, my simple friend, these good things were presents—came in streams. From dawn my doors were thronged with visitors, and in the day it was a procession of the fairest gifts of earth.

SIMYLUS. Why, you must have seized the crown after my death.

POLYSTRATUS. Oh no, it was only that I inspired a number of tender passions.

SIMYLUS. Tender passions, indeed! what, you, an old man with hardly a tooth left in your head!

POLYSTRATUS. Certainly; the first of our townsmen were in love with me. Such as you see me, old, bald, blear-eyed, rheumy, they delighted to do me honour; happy was the man on whom my glance rested a moment.

SIMYLUS. Well, then, you had some adventure like Phaon's, when he rowed Aphrodite across from Chios; your God granted your prayer and made you young and fair and lovely again.

POLYSTRATUS. No, no, I was as you see me, and I was the object of all desire.

SIMYLUS. Oh, I give it up.

POLYSTRATUS. Why, I should have thought you knew the violent passion for old men who have plenty of money and no children.

SIMYLUS. Ah, now I comprehend your beauty, old fellow; it was the Golden Aphrodite bestowed it.

POLYSTRATUS. I assure you, Simylus, I had a good deal of satisfaction out of my lovers; they idolized me, almost. Often I would be coy and shut some of them out. Such rivalries! such jealous emulation!

SIMYLUS. And how did you dispose of your fortune in the end?

POLYSTRATUS. I gave each an express promise to make him my heir; he believed, and treated me to more attentions than ever; meanwhile I had another genuine will, which was the one I left, with a message to them all to go hang.

SIMYLUS. Who was the heir by this one? one of your relations, I suppose.

POLYSTRATUS. Not likely; it was a handsome young Phrygian I had lately bought.

SIMYLUS. Age?

POLYSTRATUS. About twenty.

SIMYLUS. Ah, I can guess his office.

POLYSTRATUS. Well, you know, he deserved the inheritance much better than they did; he was a barbarian and a rascal; but by this time he has the best of society at his beck. So he inherited; and now he is one of the aristocracy; his smooth chin and his foreign accent are no bars to his being called nobler than Codrus, handsomer than Nireus, wiser than Odysseus.

SIMYLUS. Well, I don't mind; let him be Emperor of Greece, if he likes, so long as he keeps the property away from that other crew.

Diogenes Dresses Down a Proud Monarch

DIOGENES AND MAUSOLUS

DIOGENES. Why so proud, Carian? How are you better than the rest of us?

MAUSOLUS. Sinopean, to begin with, I was a King; king of all Caria, ruler of many Lydians, subduer of islands, conqueror of well-nigh the whole of Ionia, even to the borders of Miletus. Further, I was comely, and of noble stature, and a mighty warrior. Finally, a vast tomb lies over me in Halicarnassus, of such dimensions, of such exquisite beauty as no other shade can boast. Thereon are the perfect semblances of man and horse, carved in the fairest marble; scarcely may a temple be found to match it. These are the grounds of my pride; are they inadequate?

DIOGENES. Kingship—beauty—heavy tomb; is that it?

MAUSOLUS. It is as you say.

DIOGENES. But, my handsome Mausolus, the power and the beauty are no longer there. If we were to appoint an umpire now on the question of comeliness, I see no reason why he should prefer your skull to mine. Both are bald, and bare of flesh; our teeth are equally in evidence; each of us has lost his eyes, and each is snub-nosed. Then as to the tomb and the

costly marbles, I dare say such a fine erection gives the Halicarnassians something to brag about and show off to strangers: but I don't see, friend, that you are the better for it, unless it is that you claim to carry more weight than the rest of us, with all that marble on the top of you.

MAUSOLUS. Then all is to go for nothing? Mausolus and Diogenes are to rank as equals?

DIOGENES. Equals! My dear sir, no; I don't say that. While Mausolus is groaning over the memories of earth, and the felicity which he supposed to be his, Diogenes will be chuckling. While Mausolus boasts of the tomb raised to him by Artemisia, his wife and sister, Diogenes knows not whether he has a tomb or no—the question never having occurred to him; he knows only that his name is on the tongues of the wise, as one who lived the life of a man; a higher monument than yours, vile Carian slave, and set on firmer foundations.

THE GESTA ROMA-NORUM



THE GESTA ROMANORUM, *The Deeds of the Romans, were among the most popular tales of the Middle Ages. They were a mine from which Chaucer, Boccaccio, Gower, Shakespeare, and many others drew materials. Their title is a little misleading, for many of them are feudal or Oriental rather than Roman. Latin renderings were compiled in the late thirteenth century, and there are English manuscript versions surviving from the middle of the fifteenth century. Wynkyn de Worde printed an English version around 1510-15.*

Saddled with a moralizing framework, they were widely used by monks and priests as cautionary illustrations in sermons. They embrace a wide variety of theme from solemn exhortation to supernatural marvel. The two quoted here show that the Middle Ages, like all other periods, enjoyed satirizing the jangles of married life and making conniving-mother-in-law jokes. Noticeable in the first story are the quiet urbanity and ironic humor of its tone ("that gentle tree," the "laudable" wishes of the wives) and the demureness with which it states the wild hyperbole on which it closes.

TWO SHORT STORIES

A TREE FOR WIVES TO HANG UPON

Valerius tells us that a man named Patelinus one day burst into a flood of tears, and calling his son and neighbors around him, said, "Alas! alas! I have now growing in my garden a fatal tree, on which my first poor wife hung herself, then my second, and after that my third. Have I not therefore cause for the wretchedness I exhibit?"

"Truly," said one who was called Arrius, "I marvel that you should weep at such an unusual instance of good fortune. Give me, I pray you, two or three sprigs of that gentle tree, which I will divide with my neighbors, and thereby afford every man an opportunity of indulging the laudable wishes of his spouse."

Paletinus complied with his friend's request, and ever after found this remarkable tree the most productive part of his estate.

HOLDING THE SHEET BEFORE THE HUSBAND

A soldier, going into a far country, entrusted his wife to the care of her mother. But some time after her husband's departure, the wife fell in love with a young man, and communicated her wishes to the mother. She approved of the connection, and without delay sent for the object of her daughter's criminal attachment. But while they feasted, the soldier unexpectedly returned and beat at his gate.

The wife in great tremor concealed the lover in her bed, and then opened the door for her husband. Being weary with travel, he commanded his bed to be got ready; and the wife, more and more disturbed, knew not what she should do.

The mother, observing her daughter's perplexity, said, "Before you go, my child, let us show your husband the fair sheet we have made."

Then standing up, she gave one corner of the sheet to her daughter and held the other herself, extending it before him so as to favor the departure of the lover, who took the hint and escaped.

When he had clearly got off, "Now," said the mother, "spread the sheet on the bed with your own hands—we have done our part in weaving it."

FOLK CYNICISM IN THE BEAST EPIC



THE BEAST *epic,* Reynard the Fox, *was popular all through the Middle Ages A primitive Latin ancestor of the tale existed as early as 940: two centuries later we find one in which the animals are given names· Ysengrimus the wolf, Reinardus the fox, Bruno the bear, Balduinus the ass. There are versions in half-French-half-Latin, French, Flemish, Low and High German, and even Icelandic. Some of the successive authors were monkish adapters, some* trouvères *Thus, though the English translation was not made and published by Caxton until 1481, the story is much older.*

A few of Aesop's Fables *appear in the narrative as incidental stories the man and the serpent, the horse envious of the hart's fleetness, the ass and the hound, the wolf and the crane. But the subject of the whole tale is Reynard's wiliness in wriggling out of the constantly increasing dangers his deceptions, betrayals, and murders bring upon him. Reynard always overreaches the others by an adroit playing upon their weaknesses· Bruin the bear's greedy love of honey, Tybert the cat's fierce pursuit of mice, Bellyn the ram's stupid desire to be regarded as clever. Even Noble the lion, monarch of the beasts, allows himself to be gulled by alluring*

inventions of buried treasure and is easily deflected from his purposes by following the whims of his wife. At the end, in a burlesque trial by combat, Reynard triumphs over Isegrim by shaving off all his hair, and oiling his body, throwing dirt in his opponent's face, blinding him with urine, and, well, not hitting, but squeezing, below the belt.

Together with a certain amount of bawdy humor, there is a great deal of the crude medieval comedy of drubbings, bloody snouts, and brutal mutilations. The underlying theme reveals itself as a sly deflation of conventional morals. The animals Reynard defeats by his cajoleries and twistings are seldom better than he is, only more foolish. Peasant Machiavellianism reaches the cynical conclusion that life is a struggle between unscrupulous brains and selfish stupidity.

REYNARD THE FOX

*** After many complaints about Reynard's misdeeds, Noble the Lion had sent Bruin commanding the fox to appear at Court and defend himself against these charges. Tempted by Reynard into a trap baited with honey, Bruin had his muzzle torn and battered and his claws pulled out, and rolled himself howling back to Court ***

Reynard Betrays Tybert the Cat Into a Snare

THE KING said: "How durst this false thief Reynard do this? I say to you, Bruin, and swear by my crown, I shall so avenge you on him that ye shall owe me thanks!"

He sent for all the wise beasts, and desired counsel how that he might avenge this over-great wrong the fox had done. Then the Council ordained, old and young, that he should be sent for, and summoned earnestly again, to abide such judgment as should there be given him on all his trespasses. And they thought that the cat Tybert might best do this message if he would, for he is right wise. The King thought the counsel good.

Then the King said: "Sir Tybert, ye shall now go to Reynard, and say to him this second time that he come to Court to answer the plea. Though he be fell to other beasts, he trusts you well and will do your counsel. And tell him, if he come not, he shall have the third warning and be summoned, and if then he come not, we shall proceed by law against him and all his lineage without mercy."

Tybert spake: "My Lord the King, they that thus counseled you were not my friends. He will not for me neither come ne abide. I beseech you, dear King, send some other to him. I am little and feeble. Bruin the bear, who was so great and strong, could not bring him. how should I then take it on hand?"

"Nay," said the King, "Sir Tybert, ye are wise and well learned. Though ye be not great, there lies not much in that. Many do more with skill and knowledge than with might and strength."

Then said the cat. "Since it must needs be done, I must then take it upon me. God give grace that I may well achieve it, for my heart is heavy, and evil-willed thereto."

Tybert soon made him ready toward Maleperduys. And he saw from far come flying one of St. Martin's birds; then cried he aloud and said: "All

hail, gentle bird, turn thy wings hitherward, and fly on my right side." The bird flew forth upon a tree which stood on the left side of the cat. Then was Tybert woe; for he thought it was a sinister token and a sign of harm. For if the bird had flown on his right side, he had been merry and glad; but now he was anxious lest his journey should turn to misfortune. He went and ran toward Maleperduys, and there found he the fox alone standing before his house.

Tybert said: "The rich God give you good even, Reynard! The King hath menaced you to take your life from you if ye come not now with me to the Court."

The fox then spake and said: "Tybert, my dear cousin, ye be right welcome! I would well truly that ye had much good luck." What hurted it the fox to speak fair? Though he said well, his heart thought it not; and that shall be seen ere they depart.

Reynard said: "Shall we this night be together? I will make you good cheer, and tomorrow early in the dawning we will go together to the Court. Good nephew, let us do so: I have none of my kin that I trust so much as you. Here was Bruin the bear—the traitor! He looked so knavishly on me, and methought he was so strong, that I would not for a thousand marks have gone with him; but, cousin, I will tomorrow go early with you."

Tybert said: "It is best that we go now, for the moon shines as light as if it were day: I never saw fairer weather."

"Nay, dear cousin, such might meet us by daytime that would make us good cheer and by night peradventure might do us harm. It is suspicious to walk by night. Therefore abide this night with me."

Tybert said: "What should we eat if we abode here?"

Reynard said: "Here is but little to eat. Ye may well have a honeycomb, good and sweet. What say ye, Tybert, will ye any thereof?"

Tybert answered: "I set naught thereby. Have ye nothing else? If ye gave me a good fat mouse, I should be better pleased."

"A fat mouse!" said Reynard. "Dear cousin, what say ye? Hereby dwelleth a priest and hath a barn by his house. Therein are so many mice that a man could not lead them away upon a wain. I have heard the priest many times complain that they did him much harm."

"Oh, dear Reynard, lead me thither for all that I may do for you!"

"Yea, Tybert, say ye truth? Love ye well mice?"

"If I love them well?" said the cat. "I love mice better than anything that men give me! Know ye not that mice savor better than game—yea, than pancakes or pasties? Will ye well do, so lead me thither where the mice are, and then ye shall win my love, yea, although ye had slain my father, mother, and all my kin."

Reynard said: "Ye mock and jest therewith!"

The cat said: "So help me God, I do not!"

"Tybert," said the fox, "wist I that verily, I would yet this night make ye that ye should be full of mice."

"Reynard!" quoth he. "Full? That were many."

"Tybert, ye jest!"

"Reynard," quoth he, "in truth I do not. If I had a fat mouse, I would not give it for a golden noble."

"Let us go then, Tybert," quoth the fox; "I will bring you to the place ere I go from you."

"Reynard," quoth the cat, "upon your safe-conduct I would well go with you to Montpellier."

"Let us go then," said the fox. "We tarry too long."

Thus went they forth, without hindrance to the place where they would be, to the priest's barn, which was fast walled about with a mud wall. And the night before had the fox broken in, and had stolen from the priest a good fat hen; and the priest, all angry, had set a snare before the hole to avenge him; for he would fain have taken the fox. This well knew the fox, and said: "Sir Tybert, cousin, creep into this hole, and ye shall not tarry long but that ye shall catch mice by great heaps. Hark how they pipe! When ye be full, come again, I will tarry here after you before this hole. We will tomorrow go together to the Court. Tybert, why tarry ye thus long? Come off, and so may we return soon to my wife, who waits for us, and shall make us good cheer."

Tybert said: "Reynard, cousin, is it then your counsel that I go into this hole? These priests are so wily and shrewish I dread to take harm."

"Oh, ho, Tybert!" said the fox, "I never saw you so sore afraid. What aileth you?"

The cat was ashamed, and sprang into the hole. And anon he was caught in the snare by the neck, ere he wist. Thus deceived Reynard his guest and cousin.

As Tybert was ware of the snare, he was afraid and sprang forth—the snare went to. Then he began to shout, for he was almost strangled. He called, he cried, and made a villainous noise.

Reynard stood before the hole, and heard all, and was well satisfied, and said "Tybert, love ye well mice? Be they fat and good? Knew the priest hereof, or Mertynet, they be so gentle that they would bring you sauce. Tybert, ye sing and eat—is that the custom of the Court? Lord God, if Isegrim were there by you, in such rest as ye be now, then should I be glad; for oft hath he done me damage and harm."

Tybert could not get away; but he mewed and cried out so loud, that

Mertynet sprang up and cried: "God be thanked, my snare hath taken the thief that hath stolen our hens. Arise up; we will reward him!"

With these words arose the priest in an evil time, and waked all that were in the house, and cried in a loud voice: "The fox is taken!"

There leaped and ran all that there was. The priest himself ran, all mother-naked. Mertynet was the first that came to Tybert. The priest took to Locken, his wife, an offering-candle, and bade her light it at the fire, and he smote Tybert with a great staff. There received Tybert many a great stroke all over his body. Mertynet was so angry that he smote the cat an eye out. The naked priest lifted up and should have given a great stroke to Tybert, but Tybert, who saw that he must die, sprang between the priest's legs with his claws and with his teeth that he tore out his right colyon or balock-stone. That leap became ill to the priest, and to his great shame.

This thing fell down upon the floor. When Dame Locken knew that, she sware by her father's soul, that she would rather it had cost her all the offerings of a whole year than that the priest should have had that harm, hurt, and shame and that it had not happened; and said "In the Devil's name was the snare there set! See Mertynet, dear son, this is thy father's harness. This is a great shame and to me a great hurt, for, though he be healed thereof, he is but a lost man to me, and also shall never be able to do that sweet play and game."

The fox stood without, before the hole, and heard all these words, and laughed so sore that he could hardly stand. He spake thus all softly: "Dame Locken, be all still, and your great sorrow sink. Although the priest hath lost one of his stones, it shall not hinder him: he shall do with you well enough. There is in the world many a chapel in which is rung but one bell." Thus scorned and mocked the fox the priest's wife, Dame Locken, that was full of sorrow.

The priest fell down aswoon. They took him up, and brought him again to bed. Then went the fox away to his burrow and left Tybert the cat in great dread and jeopardy, for the fox wist none other but that the cat was nigh dead. But, when Tybert the cat saw them all busy about the priest, then began he to bite and gnaw the snare in the middle asunder, and sprang out of the hole, and went rolling and rolling toward the King's Court. And he came to the Court as a poor wight. He had caught harm at the priest's house by the help and counsel of the fox. His body was all beaten-to-pieces, and blind on the one eye.

THE SUN-WARMED WISDOM OF CHAUCER



CHAUCER'S *age is an age of transition between the medieval and the modern. Chivalry, a dying order flaring up in a kind of autumnal splendor, glows with a pageantry more magnificent than when the wine of youth ran in its veins. Plate armor, burnished and damascened, glitters on the battle-field among dancing pennons and waving crests. The horned headdresses of ladies tower fantastically into the air, and the pointed toes of noble-men's shoes curl up in improbable spirals. But the crossbow has already destroyed the military value of the mounted knight, whom firearms will presently leave a mere decorative survival: Crécy was won by the arrows of massed yeomen.*

National states are beginning to assert the solid might that will replace the shadowy authority of the Holy Roman Empire, just as Huss and Wyclif and the Lollards show stirrings of what will grow to the Protestant revolt against the papacy. Capitalism assumes a strangely modern color when we read of the failure, in 1345, of two great Florentine banking houses, the Bardi and the Peruzzi. Imperialism appears in Edward III's armed claim to the throne of France and John of Gaunt's attempt to seize

the kingdom of Castile. Labor, grown conscious of its power with the scarcity of hands that followed the Black Death, terrified vested interests by its demands; convulsed France with the violences of the Jacquerie, *and reduced English conservatives like John Gower to panic with the uprisings —really labor strikes—of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. Reactionaries met the threat with repressive legislation and were fought with radical theory Education was spreading with the Revival of Learning; between 1340 and 1410 an entire chain of universities spread from Cracow to Saint Andrews*

Chaucer lived in the very flood tide of these changes. Of a middle-class London family, he had court connections that brought him into public employment all his life. He served in the army, was taken prisoner, and ransomed by the King himself. He was Controller of Customs, Commissioner of Buildings, M.P. for the County of Kent, an ambassador on diplomatic and secret missions to France, Italy, Flanders. This humorous, good-natured, practical man, busy in the world's affairs, is as different as can be imagined from the conventional image of the shrinking and sensitive poet leading a cloistered existence.

Chaucer began his literary career as a courtly poet of romance; he translated the long French Roman de la Rose, *and his own early* Book of the Duchess *merged the established medieval forms of the dream and the lover's lament.* The House of Fame *uses the vision again, but this time in an allegory of sharply realistic satire showing that good and evil names are only confused gossip borne on air.* Troilus and Cressida, *for all its legendary background of the fall of Troy and its conventions of courtly love, is fundamentally a profound and realistic study of human character and a psychological tragedy. And then, from the past and the allegory and the dream, Chaucer moves into the April sunlight of his own contemporary England, and gathers an immortal company at the Tabard to joggle down the rutted fourteenth-century roads to Canterbury.*

No longer is he speaking merely for the nobility or the court It is all England that is here in miniature: the Knight and roaring Miller, the Shipman, Yeoman, and scoundrelly Pardoner, the good Parson and plump Monk, the Franklin with his beard white as a daisy, the gat-toothed Wife of Bath, and the rest of that lively train. And their stories are not Chaucer's stories put into their mouths, but their own. It is the reeling Miller who manages to get in a dig at his enemy the Carpenter with his tale of the luscious Alison, "wincing as is a jolly colt" but with a come-hither look in her eye, and how she served her husband, a carpenter. It is the grave

Clerk of Oxford who answers the Wife of Bath's remarks on keeping husbands in subjection with the story of the patient Griselda, and then courteously recites a poem composed in the Wife's honor, in which he advises wives to "clatter like windmills in a gale" and leave their husbands to "weep and wring and wail."

Satire glimmers constantly through both the descriptions of the pilgrims and the stories they tell, but Chaucer enjoys the whole human comedy too much and revels too heartily in the richness of human nature to be pure satirist. He delights in all that is vividly itself, from saintly parson to roistering scalawag The fiery-faced Summoner, he tells us appreciatively, had a voice twice as loud as a trumpet; the bald head of the Monk shone like glass; at cloth-making the Wife of Bath positively beat the Dutch! When the Canon's Yeoman comes spurring up to join the company, Chaucer observes his dripping brow and exclaims in ecstasy, "It was joye for to see him sweat!" So vast a relish for all experience cannot confine itself to being censorious.

Nevertheless, Chaucer is keenly alive to the laughable weaknesses of his people. Seeing the Squire as a brave, polite, and cultivated young gentleman, Chaucer also notes his dandyism, the raiment embroidered as if it were a mead of flowers white and red, and the locks curled as if they were laid in press, and takes a little dig at his gallantries:

> *So hot he loved that by nightertale*
> *He slept no more than doth a nightingale.*

The Monk, who loves hunting and horseflesh, his bridle jingling in the wind, and enjoys fat swans best of any roast, is, Chaucer tells us with a witty swipe that cuts both ways, "a manly man, to been an abbot able." He is equally clear in revealing the vices of the more unscrupulous pilgrims, the venal Summoner who for a quart of wine would overlook a man's having a concubine, the Friar with his complaisance to well-heeled sinners, and the cynical Pardoner cheating people with pig's bones displayed as holy relics. Let there be no mistake, though: Chaucer's lively understanding, too genial to abominate the man, does not excuse the sin.

His all-embracing sympathy, that runs through the portraits of the pilgrims, runs just as warmly through the tales they tell. The Cock and the Fox, *with its delicate raillery at the loquacity of women, teases Chanticleer no less for letting Pertelote shame him into ignoring his dream. "Mulier est*

hominis confusio," quotes Chanticleer, and then gallantly mistranslates his own remarks:

> *Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,*
> *Woman is mannës joy and mannes bliss.*

The Nun's Priest who tells the story, a confessor of women, denies humorously that he had any desire to criticize the advice-giving of women· "These been the cockes wordes, and not mine," and piles it on in an exaggeration of generosity, "I can none harm of no woman divine." Chaucer slyly leaves it to us to decide just how far we want to agree with the priest.

He uses the beast fable with an elvish subtlety entirely novel. For Chanticleer and Pertelote are not really a cock and a hen, of course, any more than Reynard and Tybert the cat or the creatures of Aesop were really animals. Chanticleer, piling up examples of the meanings of dreams from Cicero, the Golden Legend, Macrobius, the Book of Daniel, Joseph and "Dan" Pharaoh's dream, the stories of Croesus and Andromache, grows more and more incredible as a cock and becomes a delicious parody of pompous erudition. And Pertelote, garrulously arguing from Cato, and talking about red colera and black bile, and offering a whole pharmacopoeia of herbs and laxatives and purges, is all woman and housewife. But then, just as we have come to think of them as man and woman, Chaucer tosses in a vivid phrase to remind us of their being fowls· "Just peck them up where they grow," "When I see the beauty of your face, Ye been so scarlet hue about your eyen," "Redder than coral was his comb, and all Crested with notches like a castle wall."

The truth is that instead of trying to make us forget the absurdity of a cock behaving like a man, Chaucer rubs it in. As G. K Chesterton remarks, "Chaucer reveled, I might say wallowed, in the wild disproportion of making his little farmyard fowl talk like a philosopher and even a scholar"; he deliberately makes his story of a cock and a hen a cock-and-bull story. But behind the patent joke there lurks a cosmic paradox Is it more fantastic for a cock to be described as a man than for a man to be described as a man? Perhaps he is only a featherless fowl talking grandiloquently about the riddle of Destiny.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

*** We do not know the date of the *Canterbury Tales*, except that they were composed in the later part of Chaucer's life and that he died around 1400. The modern rendering used here is that of Frank Ernest Hill ***

Shamed by Dame Pertelote into Ignoring His Prophetic Dream, Chanticleer Falls into the Fox's Jaws, But Escapes by a Ruse

ONCE, long ago, set close beside a wood,
Meagre of look, a little cottage stood
Where dwelt a poor old widow in a dale.
This widow, she of whom I tell my tale,
Even since the day when she was last a wife
All patiently had led a simple life;
Small were her earnings and her property,
But what God sent she used with husbandry,
And kept two daughters and herself. Of sows
Three and no more she had about the house,
Also a sheep called Molly, and three kine.
Her sooty hall and bower were nothing fine,
And there full many a slender meal she ate.
No poignant sauce was needed for her plate. . . .
She had a yard, that was enclosed about
By sticks, and a dry ditch that ran without,
And there she kept a cock named Chanticleer;
None in the land at crowing was his peer.
His voice was merrier than the organ's tone
That loud on mass-days in the church is blown,
And surer from his lodge his crowing fell
Than stroke of any clock or abbey bell.
He knew by nature each ascension of
The equinoxial circle arched above,
For when fifteen degrees had been ascended,
He crowed, so that it could not be amended.

Redder than coral was his comb, and all
Crested with notches, like a castle wall;
His bill was black—like jet it seemed to glow—
Like azure shone each leg and every toe,
His nails were white—the lily flower is duller;
And gold all burnished was his body's color.
This noble cock had under governance
Seven hens, to do all wholly his pleasance;
Which were his paramours and sisters dear
And in their colors matched him wondrous near;
Of whom she that was fairest hued of throat
Fairly was called, Damoselle Pertelote.
Courteous she was, discreet and debonaire,
Companionable, and bore herself so fair
Even since the day that she was seven nights old,
She hath the heart of Chanticleer in hold—
Locked in each motion, in each graceful limb;
He loved her so, that this was well with him.
But what a joy it was to hear them sing
In sweet accord: "My Love's Gone Journeying"
While the bright sun uprose from out the land,
For this was in the time, I understand,
When all the birds and beasts could sing and speak.
So once it fell, as day began to break,
And Chanticleer with his wives one and all
Was sitting on his perch within the hall,
And next him sat this fair Dame Pertelote,
That Chanticleer groaned deeply in his throat,
Like one that in his dream sore troubled is.
And when she heard this roaring groan of his,
Pertelote was aghast, and cried: "Dear heart,
What aileth you, that thus ye groan and start?
What a fine sleeper! Fie now, fie for shame!"
But Chanticleer replied: "I pray you, Dame,
Take it not so amiss; by God, I seemed
Just now in such a danger as I dreamed
That still my heart is strangely terrified.
God bring my dream to something good!" he cried,
"And out of prison foul my body keep!
Now I was roaming (so I dreamed in sleep)
Within our yard, and there I saw a beast

Was like a dog, and would have made arrest
Upon my body, and would have had me dead.
His color was between a yellow and red,
And tipped his tail was, likewise both his ears,
With black, quite different from his other hairs.
His snout was small between two glowing eyes;
Even now my heart with terror almost dies;
And doubtless it was this which made me start."
"For shame!" quoth she. "Fie on you, small of heart!
Alas!" she cried, "for, by the God above,
Now have ye lost my heart and all my love:
I cannot love a coward, by my faith.
For truly, what so any woman saith,
We all desire, if such a thing can be,
Husbands that shall be sturdy, wise, and free,
Trusty, and not a fool, nor one to hoard,
Nor such as stands aghast to see a sword,
Nor yet a boaster, by the God above:
How durst ye say for shame unto your love
That there was anything on earth ye feared?
Have ye no man's heart, though ye have a beard?
And was it dreams that brought this melancholy?
God knows that nothing is in dreams but folly.
Dreams are engendered out of gluttony,
And drink, and from complexions, it may be,
That show of humors more than should be right.
Surely this vision which ye dreamed last night
Comes of the too great superfluity
Ye have of your red *colera*, pardee,
Which makes folk in their dreams to have great dread
Of arrows, or of fire with tongues of red,
Of red beasts, that will bite them, and of all
Struggle and strife, and dogs both great and small—
Just as the humor of melancholy will make
Full many a man within his sleep to break
Out crying with fear of black bears or black bulls
Or else of some black devil that at him pulls.
Of other humors I could tell you still
That work on many a sleeping man much ill,
But I will pass as quickly as I can.

"Lo, Cato, he that was so wise a man,
Said he not thus: Take no account of dreams?
Now, sire," she said, "when we fly from the beams
For God's love take a little laxative;
Upon my soul, and as I hope to live,
My counsel is the best, and it is wholly
The truth: for choler and for melancholy
Purge yourself now and, since ye must not tarry,
And in this town is no apothecary,
I will myself to certain herbs direct you
That shall be profit to you, and correct you;
And in our very yard such herbs should be
Which of their nature have the property
To purge you wholly, under and above.
Forget this not, I say, for God's own love! . . .
Just peck them where they grow, and eat. But make
Good cheer now, husband, for your fathers' sake.
Fear ye no dream, now can I say no more."
"Madam," quoth he, "*grand merci* for your lore
Yet touching this Lord Cato who, I own,
Hath for his wisdom such a great renown,
Though he adviseth us to take no heed
Of dreams—by God, in old books can ye read
Of many a man, more in authority
Than ever Cato was, God prosper me,
That say just the reverse of what he says,
And by experience in many ways
Find that our dreams may be prophetic things
Alike for joys and woeful happenings
That in this present life all folk endure.
This needs no argument to make it sure,
For the full proof is shown in many a deed.
"One of the greatest authors that men read
Says thus that on a time two friends set out
On pilgrimage, and they were both devout;
And it befell they came unto a town
Where were such crowds of people up and down
And in the hostelries so little space
There was not even a cottage in the place
Wherein the both of them might harbored be.

So they were forced, of sheer necessity,
For that night's sleeping to part company,
And each of them goes to his hostelry
To take his lodging as it might befall.
The one of them was bedded in a stall
Out in a yard with oxen of the plow;
The other got a proper place somehow,
As was his chance, or fortune, it may be,
That governs all lives universally.
"And it befell that, long before the day,
This man, as dreaming in his bed he lay,
Thought that he heard his friend begin him call,
Crying· 'Alas! for in an ox's stall
This night shall I be murdered as I lie.
Now help me, dear my brother, ere I die.
Arise! in all haste come to me!' he said.
His comrade started from his sleep in dread,
But when he was awakened from his dreaming
He turned, and gave no notice to it, deeming
That all his dream was but a vanity!
And twice as he was sleeping thus dreamed he.
And then he thought he saw his friend again
A third time, and he said, 'Now am I slain.
Behold my wounds, bloody and deep and wide!
Arise up early on the morrow-tide
And at the west gate of the town,' quoth he,
'A cart with dung full laden shalt thou see,
In which my body is hidden secretly;
Then boldly stop that dung-cart instantly.
My gold did cause my murder, to say truly.'
Then all the slaying did he tell him duly,
With a full piteous face and pale of hue.
And ye may trust, his dream he found full true.
For on the morrow, with the break of day,
Unto his comrade's inn he took his way,
And when he came upon the ox's stall
To his companion he began to call.
"The landlord spoke and answered him anon
After this fashion: 'Sir, your friend is gone,
He went from out the town when day first broke.'

Then straightway in this man suspicion woke,
For he remembered what he dreamed, and he
Would stay no more, but went forth instantly
Unto the west gate of the town, and found
A dung-cart, set as if to dung the ground,
That was arrayed exactly in the way
As in his dream he heard the dead man say.
Then with a bold heart he began to cry
Justice and vengeance on this villainy:
'My friend was slain last night, and in this cart
Lies staring with a wound above his heart!
I cry upon the officers,' quoth he,
'That should keep rule here, and security!
Help! Help! Alas, here lies my comrade slain!'
What should I add to make the tale more plain?
The folk rushed out and cast the cart to ground,
And in the middle of the dung they found
The body of the man, murdered all new.
"O blissful God, that art so just and true!
Lo! always thus murder dost thou betray!
Murder will out, we see it day by day.
So loathsome is it, and such cursèd treason
To God, the soul of justice and of reason,
That never will He let it hidden be,
Though it should stay a year or two or three,
Murder will out—this is my whole opinion.
Straightway the officers that had dominion
Over the city, seized and tortured so
The carter, and the landlord with him, too,
That soon thèy both confessed their villainy
And by the neck were hanged. So men may see
From such examples, dreams are to be feared. . . .
"And furthermore, I pray you notice well
In the Old Testament, if Daniel
Believed that dreams were any vanity,
And read of Joseph too, and ye shall see
Whether some dreams may be (I say not all)
Warnings of things that afterwards befall.
Consider Egypt's King, Dan Pharao,
And let his baker and his butler show

Whether of dreams they felt not the result.
Whoso will divers histories consult
May read of dreams full many a wondrous thing.
"Lo, Crœsus, that in Lydia was king,—
Did he not dream he sat upon a tree,
Which signified his hanging that should be?
And lo, Andromache, Dan Hector's wife—
Before the day that Hector lost his life
Dreams gave her warning that should Hector go
With day to join the fight against the foe,
The life of Hector would be lost, and she
Warned him of this, but unsuccessfully.
He went to fight, holding her vision vain,
And so was shortly by Achilles slain.
But this tale is too long to tell, and dawn
Draws near already; I may not go on.
In brief, and for conclusion, I assert
That of this vision I shall have some hurt.
And, Madam, I will tell you furthermore
That on these laxatives I set no store,
For they are venomous, I'll never try them;
I love them never a jot, and I defy them!
"Now let us speak of mirth, and stop all this;
Dame Pertelote, as I have hope of bliss,
In one thing God hath richly sent me grace,
For when I see the beauty of your face
Ye be so scarlet red about the eyes
That as I gaze all dread within me dies,
For sure as gospel I would have you know,
Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is—
Woman's the joy of man and all his bliss.
For when at night I feel your fluffy side,
Although I may not then upon you ride,
Because our perch, alas, is made so narrow,
Such joy and solace pierce me to the marrow
That then do I defy both vision and dream."
And with that word he flew down from the beam—
For it was day—and his hens one and all;
And with a chucking he commenced to call,
For in the yard he had found a grain of corn.

His fear he scorned now with a royal scorn;
He feathered Pertelote full twenty time,
And trod as often, ere that it was prime.
All like unto a lion grim he goes,
And strutteth up and down upon his toes.
Scarcely he deigned with foot to touch the ground,
And chucked all proudly when a corn he found,
And then his wives ran to him, one and all. . . .
  But suddenly befell a grievous thing,
For ever the farther end of joy is woe.
God know'th that joys of earth are soon to go,
And if an orator could write this well,
He might embed it in a chronicle
As a fact of sovereign notability.
Let every wise man listen unto me;
This story is just as true, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot of the Lake,
Whereof are ladies reverent and fain;
Now to my theme will I return again.
  A black-marked fox, wicked and very sly,
Had lurked for three years in the wood near by,
And by a fine, premeditated plot
That same night, breaking through the hedge, had got
Into the yard where Chanticleer the fair
Was with his wives accustomed to repair;
And in a bed of herbs stone-still he lay
Till onward to eleven went the day,
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall
As do the murderers gladly—one and all—
That low in ambush crouch to murder men.
O treacherous murderer, lurking in thy den!
O new Iscariot! O new Ganilon!
O false dissembler, O thou Greek Sinon
That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow!
O Chanticleer, accursèd be that morrow
That thou into the yard flew from the beams.
Thou hadst been well admonished in thy dreams
That this same day was perilous to thee.
But that which God foreknows must surely be
As certain scholars make the matter work.
This ye will learn from any well-trained clerk:

Upon that point has been great altercation
Within the schools, and lengthy disputation
Among a hundred thousand if a man!
But I could never sift it to the bran
As could the holy doctor Augustine,
Or Boethius, or Bishop Bradwardine
To say if God's divine forewitnessing
Compelleth me of need to do a thing
(By need I mean simple necessity)
Or whether a free choice be granted me
To do that same thing or to do it not,
Though God foreknew it ere that it was wrought;
Or if his knowing binds me not a whit,
Save on condition, to accomplish it!
In no such matters will I interfere;
My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear,
That from his wife took counsel, to his sorrow,
To walk within the yard upon that morrow
That he had dreamed the dream I have related.
Women's advice is oftentimes ill-fated!
Counsel a woman brought us first to woe
And out of Paradise made Adam go
Though he was merry there, and well at ease.
But since I know not whom it might displease
Should I the advice of women hold to blame—
Forget it, for I said it but in game.
Read authors where they treat of such affairs
And hear of women in these books of theirs;
These are the cock's words only, none of mine,
For in no woman can I harm divine!
  Fair in the sand, to bathe her merrily
Lieth Pertelote, with all her sisters nigh
In the warm sun, and Chanticleer so free,
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea;
(*Physiologus* says for certainty
That they sing very well and merrily).
And so it fell that, as he cast his eye
Among the worts, upon a butterfly,
He saw this fox before him, crouching low.
Nowise it pleased him then to strut or crow,
But quick "Cok, Cok," he cried, and up he started

Like one fear striketh suddenly weak-hearted.
For any creature will desire to flee
If suddenly his enemy he see,
Though never before he saw it with his eye.
  This Chanticleer, when he the fox did spy,
He would have fled, but that the fox anon
Said, "Noble sire, alas! will ye be gone?
Be ye afraid of me that am your friend?
Now truly, I were worse than any fiend
If I should plan you hurt or villainy.
I came not to disturb your privacy;
Surely, the one and only reason bringing
Me here—it was to listen to your singing.
For certainly ye have as merry a steven
As any angel hath that sings in heaven;
There is more feeling in your music than
Boëthius had, or any singing man.
My lord your father (God him sanctify)
Likewise your mother (in her great courtesy)
Have been within my house, to my great ease,
And truly, sire, full fain I would you please.
But with respect to singing, in this wise
I say: that as I hope to keep my eyes
I never heard such singing from a man
As from your father when the day began—
Truly, it was full lusty, all his song,
And that his voice might ring more clear and strong
He used to strain until his eyes would close,
So loudly would he cry; and he uprose
Upon his toe tips as he crowed withal,
And stretched his neck out very long and small.
He was of such discretion, too, that there
Was none in any country anywhere
That him in song or wisdom might surpass.
True, I have read in *Sir Burnell the Ass*,
Among his verse, how that there was a cock
Who, all because a priest's son gave a knock
Unto his leg when he was young,—for this
Schemed that he later lost his benefice;
But certainly, no man can well compare
The high discretion and the wisdom rare

Your father had, with that cock's trickery.
But sing, sire, sing for holy charity;
Try now, can ye your father counterfeit?"
This Chanticleer his wings began to beat
As one that could no treachery descry—
So was he ravished by this flattery. . . .
This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes,
He stretched his neck, he made his eyes to close,
And thus began to make a mighty cry.
Sir Russell Fox up-bounded instantly
And by the throat he seized thus Chanticleer,
And flung him on his back, and sped from there
Off toward the wood, and no man saw him run.
O Destiny, that none of us may shun!
Alas! that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas! that Pertelote recked not of dreams!
And on a Friday fell all this mischance!
O Venus, that art goddess of pleasance,
Since Chanticleer was servant unto thee
And spent himself to serve thee faithfully,
More for delight than the world to multiply,
Why wouldst thou suffer him on thy day to die?
O Geoffrey, master dear, supreme, and skilled,
That when King Richard was with arrow killed
Made for thy noble lord complaint so sore,
Why do I lack thy meaning and thy lore,
Friday to chide with singing, as did ye?
(For truly, on a Friday slain was he.)
Then would I raise my sorrowful refrain
For Chanticleer's affright, and for his pain.
Not such a lamentation and great crying
Did Trojan ladies make for Ilium dying,
When fire and Pyrrhus' naked sword they feared,
Who seized the aged Priam by the beard
And slew him (so the *Æneid* tells the tale)
As did these hens that in the yard made wail
To see their Chanticleer in fearsome plight.
But Pertelote shrieked with surpassing might;
Louder she cried than did Hasdrubal's wife
What time she saw Hasdrubal lose his life
And Carthage burned by Roman torches. She

Was filled with grief and torment utterly,
And in the fire she flung herself, and so
Steadfast of heart in flames to death did go.
O woeful hens, your cry was like the cry
When Nero sent Rome City to the sky
And there was fearful wailing from the wives
Of Roman senators that lost their lives;
All guiltless, wicked Nero had them slain!
Now to my tale will I return again.
This simple widow and her daughters two
Heard all these hens lament with great to-do,
And rushing out of doors at once, they see
The fox make toward the forest hastily
Bearing the cock away upon his back.
They cried: "Out!" "Harrow!" "Weladay!" "Alack!"
"Ha! Ha! the fox!" and after him they ran,
And with them waving sticks came many a man;
And Collie our dog and Talbot and Gerland,
And Malkin, with a distaff in her hand;
The cows and calves ran, and the very hogs,
Crazed as they were with the barking of the dogs
And men and women making great halloo;
Their hearts with running all but burst in two.
They yelled like fiends in hell—who could have stilled them?
And the ducks cried as someone would have killed them.
The geese for fear went flying over trees,
Out of the hive there poured a swarm of bees;
Ah! *Benedicite!* such wild noise rang
In truth, that Jack Straw ramping with his gang
In search of some poor Fleming they could kill
Never made shouting that was half so shrill
As on that day was made about this fox.
They came with trumpets made of brass and box,
Of horn and bone on which they blew and tooted,
And therewithal they shrieked and whooped and hooted
Until it seemed that heaven itself would fall.
And now, good men, I pray you hearken all!
Look now how Fortune turneth suddenly
The hope and triumph of their enemy.
This cock, upon the fox's back that lay,
Despite his fear, still found a voice to say

Thus to the fox: "Now, sire, were I as ye,
God help me, I would shout defiantly:
'Turn once again, proud churls, turn one and all!
A very pestilence upon you fall!
Look ye, at last I stand within the wood!
Now do your worst, the cock is mine for good,
For I will eat him up, and quickly, too.' "
The fox replied: "In faith, that will I do!"—
But as he spoke the word, the cock broke free
Out of his open mouth full dextrously
And flew high up and perched upon a limb.
And the fox saw him there and called to him:
"Alas! O Chanticleer, alas!" quoth he,
"I fear that I have done you injury!
I frightened you by seizing you so hard
And rushing with you hither from your yard;
But, sire, I did it with no ill intent—
Come down, and I will tell you what I meant.
God help me, I will speak you fair and true."
"Nay, then," quoth he, "my curse upon us two,
And first I'll curse myself, both blood and bones,
If thou shalt fool me oftener than once!
Thou shalt no more with crafty flatteries
Make me to sing for thee and close my eyes.
For he who shuts his eyes when he should see—
God give no good to any such as he!"
"Nay," quoth the fox, "but God give him mischance
That is so indiscreet of governance
That jabbers when he ought to hold his tongue!"
So of the negligent my tale is sung,
That reckless are, and trust in flattery.
But if ye deem this naught but vanity,
As of a fox, or of a cock and hen,
Take ye the moral that it hath, good men.
For Saint Paul, saith he not that all things writ
Can point our doctrine and embellish it?
Then take the grain, and let the chaff lie still.
And now, good God, if it shall be Thy will
As saith my lord, so make us all good men
And bring us into holy bliss. *Amen.*

THE RENAISSANCE FLOWERING OF FREEDOM



THE RENAISSANCE was the flowering of all that new growth which the age of Chaucer had seen in bud. The great national states broke the power of the feudal nobility. Ferdinand and Isabella united Aragon and Castile into the single throne of Spain; Louis XI laid the foundations of the French monarchy; the Wars of the Roses were the last struggle of the barons in England, and backed by the merchants and bankers Henry VII won at Bosworth. Oriental trade and the gold of the New World stimulated a clash of rival imperialisms the vision of the City of God and a kingdom not of this world dimmed in the fierce contention of material power. Adventurers and mercenary captains seized states; artists like Benvenuto Cellini and audacious literary blackmailers like Aretino shouldered their way among the great. Careers were open to talent.

Ambition and pride—medieval sins—became virtues in the heady intoxication of this brave new world. Men wanted enjoyment, spiced dainties, cooling wines, gold, fine raiment, beauty, here and now, clamorously refusing to believe them snares of Satan. Luxury and pomp blazed in Papal Rome, the galleries of Hampton Court and Fontainebleau, the Field of

the Cloth of Gold. With this robust delight in the senses mingled the intellectual ferment of Humanism, glorifying the powers of the mind, flaunting a thousand queries and skepticisms. It made the rigors of the monastic ideal seem cramped, self-denial timorous and dingy. For good or ill, men were breathing the air of an expanded world electric with freedom and self-confidence.

It was really the Renaissance, not Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that gave birth to the doctrine of the natural goodness of man. Rabelais is typical of his age and its confidence in human nature, its refusal to believe that man is evil at the core. Rabelais insisted that though men may misuse their powers and follow their desires in dangerous ways, there is no more anything wrong with being able to build a palace and building it than there is with using a healthy body to run and jump instead of mortifying it into feebleness and disease. It is a blasphemy against the goodness of God to imagine that He fills the world with fruits and flowers and jewels and wonders to be known, only in order that man shall peevishly deny himself their enjoyment. God is no cheat to be tempting us with a thousand evils falsely tricked out as desirable. The good things of life really are good, and our desire for them is good. Rabelais affirms again and again that man, with all his natural appetites and all his powers of mind, is fundamentally sound; he reiterates a confident faith in the wholeness and harmoniousness of man's entire nature.

The monastic morality he dismisses as nothing but cowardice. It is fear of the world, fear of life. Only a slave needs to be told when to get up, when to go to bed, when to eat, when to pray; what he must eat, what he must wear, what he must think. Virtue lies in a free choice of what is good, not in blind obedience. Knowledge, responsibility, and independence, not subservience to authority, are what will bring spiritual splendor. Rabelais refuses to believe that an anarchy of selfishness and cruelty will be the inevitable result of giving men freedom. On the contrary, only free men and free women—for Rabelais does not discriminate between the sexes—can be really courteous and well bred, have generous hearts and loving spirits.

For many readers these larger issues in Rabelais are overshadowed by the qualities in him that are called Rabelaisian. It is true that Rabelais inherited from the Middle Ages, and enjoyed, a hearty and realistic awareness of the physical and animal aspects of human behavior. An evasive attitude toward coarseness and dirt is an innovation of modern prudery; an arch-

bishop of Rabelais' day might use a directness of diction that would startle a modern gangster. Rabelais exults in describing people wading through enormous meals, downing huge quantities of ale, belching and relieving themselves, and going to it again. Breaking wind, emptying the bladder, unloading the bowels, embarrass him no more than they do a small child; and Rabelais is as willing to talk about them as about astronomy, medicine, theology, or philosophy. (No more willing, as people sometimes imagine who peep through him in prurient snatches, but skip all the serious passages that bore them.) The sexual behavior of men and women he finds as heartily entertaining and amusing as Chaucer and Boccaccio did. Nature rather indelicately gave the organs of love other functions as well, and Rabelais is no more delicate than nature. Indeed, it must be frankly avowed that Rabelais is often dirty. But his dirtiness is not slime or smut; it is the dirtiness of the earth itself, the good, rich, fertile dirt out of which all life grows and ripens.

A modern reader is made especially conscious of this sprawling indecency, for Rabelais' satiric method is hyperbole made consistent and outrageous Everything in his book is many times life size, every sentiment multiplied gigantically, the whole technique a grotesque and good-humored and grandiose exaggeration. Grangousier and his wife Gargamelle are genial giants. Their son Gargantua is born yelling, "Some drink, some drink"; it takes 17,913 cows to provide him with milk, and to clothe him sixteen ells and a quarter for his codpiece alone. As a youthful prank Gargantua steals the bells of Notre Dame in Paris; during the war with the Picrocholians he combs out of his hair a cannon ball he hadn't known was there. It adds to the fun that the whole of this Homeric war, with its huge contestants and its elaborate maneuvers and campaigns, is fought around a brook and a few hills and villages, over an area little more than three miles across. In so inordinate a world as this that Rabelais has made, it is inevitable that the precocious hero should be tumbling ladies while he is hardly out of the cradle and making in boyhood fantastic sybaritic experiments with the necks of geese.

The education of Gargantua is a comic contrast between the natural development of the human organism and the distrust and toil of ecclesiastical teaching. His childhood has all the normal indifference to cleanliness and the nasty habits that convention refuses to remember; the tedious scholastic curriculum leaves him a lazy and undisciplined booby. But the experimental humanist Ponocrates arouses him by emulation, mingles

study with play, conversation, storytelling, music, and athletic sports; and by making his education not mere wearisome drudgery but an interesting part of a normal and well-balanced life achieves what the Latin sophister was totally unable to accomplish.

The Abbey of Thélème, as Gargantua and the Monk later establish it, is a parody-in-reverse of monastic life. Unlike monks and nuns, with their ugly habits of gray or brown or black, the members of this order dress to their individual tastes as beautifully and colorfully as they desire. Bells toll the monastic from a hard couch to a sparse meal; rule his life during the day, and send him to his slumber. He is vowed to celibacy, and once entered in an order only with the greatest difficulty can he withdraw. Ladies and gentlemen will dwell together at Thélème, passing the time as they will, marrying if they so desire, and leaving if they choose. But Fay ce que vouldras, *Do as you will, does not mean indulgence, incontinence, or idleness. It means consideration, generosity, good breeding, play, study, work: a full and harmonious* enlargement *of life's activities. The normal and well-rounded human being, Rabelais felt sure, wants work, responsibility, and a balanced life, and responds to the possibility of these things with a respect for the genuine welfare of others as well as himself.*

The rhymed inscription on the Gate of the Abbey epitomizes Rabelais' ideals. It warns away bigots, hypocrites, cheats, liars, cowards, thieves, drunkards, usurers, lawyers, judges, misers, melancholiacs, and fools. It welcomes all gallant, noble, gay, handsome, witty, honest, and faithful men; all well-bred, charming, merry, neat, kind, obliging, clever, wise, and virtuous ladies. The hearty good humor, the tremendous vitality of sheer fun, and even the grossness in Rabelais should not blind us to the fact that his way of life is one characterized by seriousness and breadth as well as mere roaring gusto. Rabelais refuses to starve our animal nature, he refuses to stunt our emotional nature, he refuses to limit our domains of knowledge and speculation. And philosophy and scholarship for Rabelais are just as alive as eating and drinking and love-making. His self-confident jollity can afford to make jokes even on his deathbed. "Give me my domino," he is supposed to have said when he was dying, "for I am cold; and besides, is it not written, Beati qui in domino moriuntur?"

RABELAIS

*** The successive parts of Rabelais' book appeared in 1533, 1535, 1545, 1552, and 1564 The first two books were translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart in 1653, and a translation of the third was found among his papers by Peter Motteux, who translated the fourth and fifth books in an edition published in 1708. The Motteux-Urquhart translation is the one used here.

All our selections are from Book I. The first selection has a good deal of Chapters 3 and 4, a bit of Chapter 5, and most of Chapters 6 and 7. The second selection has nearly all of Chapter 8, and the third selection nearly all of Chapters 11 and 13. The fourth selection has nearly all of Chapters 48 and 49, and all of Chapters 51 and 53 ***

How Gargantua Was Born and Began Crying for Drink

GRANGOUSIER was a good fellow in his time, and notable jester; he loved to drink neat, as much as any man that then was in the world, and would willingly eat salt meat. To this intent he was ordinarily well furnished with gammons of bacon, both of Westphalia, Mayence, and Bayonne; with store of dried neat's tongues, plenty of links, chitterlings, and puddings in their season, together with salt beef and mustard, a good deal of hard row of powdered mullet called Botargos, great provisions of sausages, not of Bologna (for he feared the Lombard boccone), but of Bigorre, Longaulnay, Brenne, and Rouargue.

In the vigor of his age he married Gargamelle, daughter to the King of the Parpaillons, a jolly pug, and well-mouthed wench. These two did oftentimes do the two-backed beast together, joyfully rubbing and frotting their bacon 'gainst one another, insofar that at last she became great with child of a fair son, and went with him unto the eleventh month; for so long, yea longer, may a woman carry her great belly, especially when it is some masterpiece of nature, and a person predestinated to the performance, in his due time, of great exploits.

Honest widows by this means may without danger play at the close-buttock game with might and main and as hard as they can for the space

of the first two months after the decease of their husbands. I pray you, my good lusty springal lads, if you find any of these females, that are worth the pains of untying the codpiece-point, get up, ride up them, and bring them to me; for if they happen within the third month to conceive, the child shall be heir to the deceased, if before he died he had no other children, and the mother shall pass for an honest woman.

The manner and occasion how Gargamelle was brought to bed and delivered of her child was thus; and if you do not believe it, I wish your bum-gut fall out and make an escapade. Her bum-gut, indeed, or fundament, escaped her in an afternoon, on the third day of February, with having eaten too many *Gobedillios*. Gobedillios are the fat tripes of *coiros*. Coiros are beeves fattened at the cratch in ox stalls.

The good man Grangousier . . . commanded there should be no want or pinching for anything. nevertheless he bade his wife eat sparingly, because she was near her time, and that these tripes were no very commendable meat. They would fain, said he, be at the chewing of ordure, that would eat the case wherein it was. Notwithstanding these admonitions, she did eat sixteen quarters, two bushels, three pecks, and a pipkin full: O the fair fecality, wherewith she swelled, by the ingrediency of such shitten stuff. After dinner they all went out in a hurle, to the grove of willows, where on the green grass, to the sound of the merry flutes and pleasant bagpipes, they danced so gallantly that it was a sweet and heavenly sport to see them so frolic.

Then did they fall upon the chat of victuals and some belly furniture to be snatched at the very same place, which purpose was no sooner mentioned but forthwith began flagons to go, gammons to trot, goblets to fly, great bowls to ting, glasses to ring. Draw, reach, fill, mix. Give it me without water, so, my friend. So, whip me off this glass neatly, bring me hither some claret, a full weeping glass till it run over. A cessation and truce with thirst.

While they were on this discourse and pleasant tattle of drinking, Gargamelle began to be a little unwell in her lower parts. Whereupon Grangousier rose from the grass, and fell to comfort her very honestly and kindly, suspecting she was in travail, and told her it was best for her to sit down upon the grass under the willows, because she was likely very shortly to see young feet, and that therefore it was convenient she should pluck up her spirits, and take a good heart anew at the fresh arrival of her

baby, saying to her withal, that although the pain was somewhat grievous to her, it would be but of short continuance, and that the succeeding joy would quickly remove that sorrow, in such sort that she should not so much as remember it.

"On with a sheep's courage," quoth he; "despatch this boy, and we will speedily fall to work for the making of another."

"Ha," said she, "so well as you speak at your own ease, you that are men; well then, in the name of God, I'll do my best, seeing that you will have it so, but would to God that it were cut from you."

"What?" said Grangousier.

"Ha," said she, "you are a good man indeed, you understand it well enough."

"What, my member?" said he. "By the goat's blood, if it please you that shall be done instantly. Cause bring hither a knife."

"Alas," said she, "the Lord forbid, I pray Jesus to forgive me, I did not say it from my heart; therefore let it alone, and do not do it neither more nor less any kind of harm for my speaking so to you. But I am like to have work enough to do today, and all for your member, yet God bless you and it."

As soon as [Gargantua] was born, he cried not as other babes use to do, *miez, miez, miez,* but with a high, sturdy, and big voice shouted aloud, "Some drink, some drink, some drink," as inviting all the world to drink with him. The noise hereof was so extremely great that it was heard in both the countries at once of Beauce and Bibarois.

The good man Grangousier drinking and making merry with the rest, heard the horrible noise which his son had made as he entered into the light of this world, when he cried out, "Some drink, some drink, some drink." Whereupon he said in French, "Que grand tu as et souple le gousier," that is to say, *How great and nimble a throat thou hast;* which the company hearing said, that verily the child ought to be called *Gargantua,* because it was the first word after his birth his father had spoke, in imitation of the ancient Hebrews. Whereupon he condescended, and his mother was very well pleased therewith. In the meanwhile, to quiet the child, they gave him to drink à tirelarigot, that is, till his throat was like to crack with it. Then was he carried to the font, and there baptized, according to the manner of all good Christians.

Immediately thereafter were appointed for him seventeen thousand, nine hundred and thirteen cows of the towns of Pautille and Breemond to furnish him with milk in ordinary, for it was impossible to find a nurse suffi-

cient for him in all the country, considering the great quantity of milk that was requisite for his nourishment; although there were not wanting some doctors of the opinion of Scotus, who affirmed that his own mother gave him suck, and that she could draw out of her breasts one thousand, four hundred, two pipes, and nine pails of milk at every time.

How Gargantua's Clothes and Codpiece Were Made

His father ordained to have clothes made to him in his own livery, which was white and blue. To work then went the tailors, and with great expedition were those clothes made, cut, and sewed, according to the fashion that was then in request. . . . To make him every shirt of his were taken up nine hundred ells of Châtellerault linen, and two hundred for the gussets, in manner of cushions, which they put under his arm-pits. . . . For his breeches were taken up eleven hundred and five ells, and a third of white broadcloth. They were cut in the form of pillars, chamfered, channeled, and pinked behind, that they might not overheat his reins: and were within the panes, puffed out with the lining of as much blue damask as was needful: and remark, that he had very good leg-harnish, proportionable to the rest of his stature.

For his codpiece was used sixteen ells and a quarter of the same cloth, and it was fastened on the top like unto a triumphal arch, most gallantly fastened with two enameled clasps, in each of which was set a great emerald, as big as an orange; for, as says Orpheus, *lib. de lapidibus*, and Pliny, *libr. ultimo*, it hath an erective virtue and comfortative of the natural member. The exiture, out-jecting, or outstanding of his codpiece, was of the length of a yard, jagged and pinked, and withal bagging, and strouting out with the blue damask lining, after the manner of his breeches. But had you seen the fair embroidery of the small needlework purl, and the curiously interlaced knots, by the goldsmith's art set out and trimmed with rich diamonds, precious rubies, fine turquoises, costly emeralds, and Persian pearls, you would have compared it to a fair cornucopià, or horn of abundance, such as you see in antiques, or as Rhea gave to the two nymphs Amalthea and Ida, the nurses of Jupiter.

And like to that horn of abundance, it was still gallant, succulent, droppy, sappy, pithy, lively, always flourishing, always fructifying, full of juice, full of flower, full of fruit, and all manner of delight. I avow God, it would have done one good to have seen him, but I will tell you more of him in

the book which I have made of the dignity of codpieces One thing I will tell you, that as it was both long and large, so was it well furnished, and victualed within, nothing like unto the hypocritical codpieces of some fond wooers and wench-courters, which are stuffed only with wind, to the great prejudice of the female sex . . .

For his coat were taken up eighteen hundred ells of blue velvet, dyed in grain, embroidered in its borders with fair gilliflowers, in the middle decked with silver purl, intermixed with plates of gold and store of pearls, hereby showing that in his time he would prove an especial good fellow and singular whip-can.

How Gargantua Passed His Childhood, and His Unusual Exploits in Cleanliness

Gargantua from three years upwards unto five was brought up and instructed in all convenient discipline by the commandment of his father, and spent that time like all other little children of the country, that is, in drinking, eating, and sleeping, in eating, sleeping, and drinking, and in sleeping, drinking, and eating. Still he wallowed and rolled himself up and down in the mire and dirt; he blurred and sullied his nose with filth; he blotted and smutched his face with any kind of scurvy stuff, he trod down his shoes in the heel. At the flies he did oftentimes yawn, and ran very heartily after the butterflies, the Empire whereof belonged to his father. He pissed in his shoes, shit in his shirt, and wiped his nose on his sleeve. He did let his snot and his snivel fall in his pottage, and dabbled, paddled, and slabbered everywhere. . . .

This little lecher was always groping his nurses and governesses, upside down, arsieversie, topsiturvy, *harribouquet,* with a *Yacco haick, hyck gio,* handling them very rudely in jumbling and tumbling them to keep them going; for he had already begun to exercise the tools, and put his codpiece in practice; which codpiece or *braguette* his governesses did every day deck up and adorn with fair nosegays, curious rubies, sweet flowers, and fine silken tufts, and very pleasantly would pass their time in taking you know what between their fingers, and dandling it, till it did revive and creep up to the bulk and stiffness of a suppository, or *streat magdeleon,* which is a hard rolled-up salve spread upon leather. Then did they burst out in laughing when they saw it lift up its ears as if the sport had liked them.

One of them would call it her little dill, her staff of love . . ; another again, her branch of coral, her female adamant, her placket-racket, her

cyprian sceptre, her jewel for ladies; and some of the other women would give it these names: my bunguetee, my stopple too, my bushrusher, my gallant wimble, my pretty borer, my little piercer, my dangling hangers, down right to it, stiff and stout, in and to, my pusher, dresser, pouting stick, my honey pipe, my pretty pillicock, linky pinky, my lusty andouille, and crimson chitterlin, my little couille bredouille, my pretty rogue, and so forth. "It belongs to me," said one; "It is mine," said the other; "What," quoth a third, "shall I have no share in it? by my faith, I will cut it then." "Ha, to cut it," said the other, "would hurt him; Madam, do you cut little children's things?"

About the end of the fifth year, Grangousier returning from the conquest of the Canarians, went by the way to see his son Gargantua. There was he filled with joy, as such a father might be at the sight of such a child of his; and while he kissed him and embraced him, he asked many childish questions of him about divers matter, and drank very freely with him and with his governesses, of whom in great earnest he asked, among other things, whether they had been careful to keep him clean and sweet? To this Gargantua answered that he had taken such a course for that himself, that in all the country there was not to be found a cleanlier boy than he.

"How is that?" said Grangousier.

"I have," answered Gargantua, "by a long and curious experiment, found out a means to wipe my bum, the most lordly, the most excellent, and the most convenient that ever was seen."

"What is that?" asked Grangousier, "how is it?"

"I will tell you by and by," said Gargantua. "Once did I wipe me with a gentlewoman's velvet mask, and found it to be good; for the softness of the silk was very voluptuous and pleasant to my fundament. Another time with one of their hoods, and in like manner that was comfortable. At another time with a lady's neckerchief, and after that I wiped me with some earpieces of hers made of crimson satin, but there was such a number of golden spangles in them (turdy round things, a pox take them) that they fetched away all the skin of my tail with a vengeance. Now I wish St. Anthony's fire burn out the bum-gut of the goldsmith that made them, and of her that wore them. This hurt I cured by wiping myself with a page's cap, garnished with a feather, after the Switzer's fashion.

"Afterwards, in dunging behind a bush, I found a March-Cat, and with it wiped my breech, but her claws were so sharp that they scratched and ulcerated all my perineum. Of this I recovered the next morning thereafter, by wiping myself with my mother's gloves, of a most excellent perfume. After that I wiped me with sage, with fennel, with anet, with mar-

joram, with roses, with gourd-leaves, with beets, with colewort, with leaves of the vine-tree, with mallow, wool-blade (which is a tail-scarlet), with lettuce, and with spinach leaves. All this did very great good to my leg. Then with mercury, with parsley, with nettles, with comfrey, but that gave me the bloody flux of Lombardy, which I healed by wiping me with my braguette. Then I wiped my tail in the sheets, in the coverlet, in the curtains, with a cushion, with Arras hangings, with a green carpet, with a table-cloth, with a napkin, with a handkerchief, with a combing cloth, in all which I found more pleasure than do mangy dogs when you rub them."

"Yea, but," said Grangousier, "which torchecul didst thou find to be the best?"

"I was coming to it," said Gargantua . . . "I wiped my tail with a hen, with a cock, with a pullet, with a calf's skin, with a hare, with a pigeon, with a cormorant, with an attorney's bag, with a hood, with a coif, with a falconer's lure. But to conclude, I say and maintain, that of all torcheculs, arsewisps, bumfodders, tail-napkins, bunghole-cleansers, and wipe-breeches, there is none in the world comparable with the neck of a goose that is well-downed, if you hold her head between your legs. And believe me therein upon mine honor, for you will feel in your nockhole a most wonderful pleasure, both in regard to the softness of the said down, and of the temperate heat of the goose, which is easily communicated to the bum-gut and the rest of the inwards, insofar as to come even to the regions of the heart and brains. And think not that the felicity of the heroes and demigods in the Elysian Fields consisteth either in their asphodel, ambrosia, or nectar, as our old women were used to say; but in this, according to my judgment, that they wipe their tails with the neck of a goose, holding her head between their legs, and such is the opinion of Master John of Scotland, alias Scotus."

The good man Grangousier, having heard this discourse, was ravished with admiration, considering the high reach and marvelous understanding of his son Gargantua.

How Gargantua Built the Abbey of Thélème, and How the Thélèmites Lived There

There was left only the monk to provide for, whom Gargantua would have made Abbot of Sevillé, but he refused it. He would have given him the Abbey of Bourgueil, or of Sanct Florent which was better, or both, if it pleased him; but the monk gave him a very peremptory answer, that

he would never take upon him the charge nor government of monks. "For how shall I be able," said he, "to rule over others, that have not full power and command over myself? If you think I have done you, or may hereafter do any acceptable service, give me leave to found an abbey after my own mind and fancy."

The notion pleased Gargantua very well, who thereupon offered him all the country of Thélème by the river of Loire till within two leagues of the great forest of Port-Huaulx. The monk then requested Gargantua to institute his religious order contrary to all others. "First, then," said Gargantua, "you must not build a wall about your convent, for all other abbeys are strongly walled and mured about."

"See," said the monk, "and not without cause (seeing wall and mur signify but one and the same thing); where there is mur before and mur behind, there is store of murmur, envy, and mutual conspiracy." Moreover, seeing there are certain convents in the world whereof the custom is, if any woman come in, I mean chaste and honest women, they immediately sweep the ground which they have trod upon; therefore was it ordained, that if any man or woman entered into religious orders should by chance come within this new abbey, all the rooms should be thoroughly washed and cleansed through which they had passed.

And because in all other monasteries and nunneries all is compassed, limited and regulated by hours, it was decreed that in this new structure there should be neither clock nor dial, but that according to the opportunities and incident occasions, all their hours should be disposed of; "for," said Gargantua, "the greatest loss of time that I know is to count the hours. What good comes of it? Nor can there be any greater dotage in the world than for one to guide and direct his courses by the sound of a bell, and not by his own judgment and discretion."

Item, Because at that time they put no women into nunneries but such as were either purblind, blinkards, lame, crooked, ill-favoured, misshapen, fools, senseless, spoiled, or corrupt; nor encloistered any men but those that were either sickly, subject to defluxions, ill-bred louts, simple sots, or peevish trouble-houses.

"But to the purpose," said the monk. "A woman that is neither fair nor good, to what use serves she?"

"To make a nun of," said Gargantua.

"Yea," said the monk, "and to make shirts and smocks." Therefore was it ordained that into this religious order should be admitted no women that were not fair, well-featured, and of a sweet disposition; nor men that were not comely, personable, and well conditioned.

Item, Because in the convents of women, men come not but underhand,

privily, and by stealth, it was therefore enacted that in this house there shall be no women in case there be not men, nor men in case there be not women.

Item, Because both men and women that are received into religious orders after the expiring of their noviciate or probation year were constrained and forced perpetually to stay there all the days of their life, it was therefore ordered that all whatever, men or women, admitted within this abbey, should have full leave to depart with peace and contentment whensoever it should seem good to them so to do.

Item, For that the religious men and women did ordinarily make three vows, to wit, those of chastity, poverty and obedience, it was therefore constituted and appointed that in this convent they might be honourably married, that they might be rich, and live at liberty.

The architecture was in a figure hexagonal, and in such a fashion that in every one of the six corners there was built a great round tower of threescore foot in diameter, and were all of a like form and bigness. Upon the north side ran along the river of Loire, on the bank whereof was situated the tower called Arctic. Going towards the east, there was another called Calaer,—the next following Anatole,—the next Mesembrine,—the next Hesperia, and the last Criere. Every tower was distant from other the space of three hundred and twelve paces. The whole edifice was everywhere six storeys high, reckoning the cellars underground for one. The second was arched after the fashion of a basket-handle; the rest were ceiled with pure wainscot, flourished with Flanders fretwork, in the form of the foot of a lamp, and covered above with fine slates, with an endorsement of lead, carrying the antique figures of little puppets and animals of all sorts, notably well suited to one another, and gilt, together with the gutters, which, jutting without the walls from betwixt the crossbars in a diagonal figure, painted with gold and azure, reached to the very ground, where they ended into great conduit-pipes, which carried all away into the river from under the house.

This same building was a hundred times more sumptuous and magnificent than ever was Bonnivet, Chambourg, or Chantilly; for there were in it nine thousand, three hundred and two and thirty chambers, every one whereof had a withdrawing room, a handsome closet, a wardrobe, an oratory, and neat passage, leading into a great and spacious hall. Between every tower in the midst of the said body of building there was a pair of winding, such as we now call lantern stairs, whereof the steps were part of porphyry, which is a dark red marble spotted with white, part of Numidian stone, which is a kind of yellowishly-streaked marble upon various colours and part of serpentine marble, with light spots on a dark green

ground, each of those steps being two and twenty foot in length and three fingers thick, and the just number of twelve betwixt every rest, or, as we now term it, landing-place. In every resting-place were two fair antique arches where the light came in: and by those they went into a cabinet, made even with and of the breadth of the said winding, and the reascending above the roofs of the house ended conically in a pavilion. By that vise or winding they entered on every side into a great hall, and from the halls into the chambers. From the Arctic tower unto the Criere were the fair great libraries in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish, respectively distributed in their several cantons, according to the diversity of these languages. In the midst there was a wonderful scalier or winding-stair, the entry whereof was without the house, in a vault or arch six fathom broad. It was made in such symmetry and largeness that six men-at-arms with their lances in their rests might together in a breast ride all up to the very top of all the palace. From the tower Anatole to the Mesembrine were fair spacious galleries, all coloured over and painted with the ancient prowesses, histories and descriptions of the world.

In the middle of the lower court there was a stately fountain of fair alabaster. Upon the top thereof stood the three graces, with their cornucopias, or horns of abundance, and did jet out the water at their breasts, mouth, ears, eyes, and other open passages of the body. The inside of the buildings in this lower court stood upon great pillars of chalcedony stone, and porphyry marble, made archways after a goodly antique fashion. Within those were spacious galleries, long and large, adorned with curious pictures, the horns of bucks and unicorns: with rhinosceroses, water horses called hippopotamus, the teeth and tusks of elephants, and other things well worth the beholding. The lodging of the ladies, for so we may call those gallant women, took up all from the tower Arctic unto the gate Mesembrine. The men possessed the rest.

Before the said lodging of the ladies, that they might have their recreation, between the first two towers, on the outside, were placed the tilt-yard, the barriers of lists for tournaments, the hippodrome or riding-court, the theatre or public playhouse, and natatory or place to swim in, with most admirable baths in three stages, situated above one another, well furnished with all necessary accommodation, and store of myrtle-water. By the riverside was the fair garden of pleasure, and in the midst of that the glorious labyrinth. Between the two other towers were the courts for the tennis and the baloon. Towards the tower Criere stood the orchard, full of all fruit-trees, set and ranged in a quincuncial order. At the end of that was the great park, abounding with all sorts of venison. Betwixt the third

couple of towers were the butts and marks for shooting with a snapwork gun, an ordinary bow for common archery, or with a crossbow. The office-houses were without the tower Hesperia, of one storey high. The stables were beyond the offices, and before them stood the falconry, managed by ostrich-keepers and falconers very expert in the art, and it was yearly supplied and furnished by the Candians, Venetians, Sarmates, now called Muscoviters, with all sorts of most excellent hawks, eagles, gerfalcons, goshawks, sacres, laniers, falcons, sparrowhawks, marlins, and all other kinds of them, so gentle and perfectly well manned, that, flying of themselves sometimes from the castle for their own disport, they would not fail to catch whatever they encountered. The venery, where the beagles and hounds were kept, was a little farther off, drawing towards the park.

All the halls, chambers and closets or cabinets were richly hung with tapestry and hangings of divers sorts, according to the variety of the seasons of the year. All the pavements and floors were covered with green cloth. The beds were all embroidered. In every back-chamber or withdrawing room there was a looking-glass of pure crystal set in a frame of fine gold, garnished all about with pearls, and was of such greatness that it would represent to the full the whole lineaments and proportion of the person that stood before it. At the going out of the halls which belong to the ladies' lodgings were the perfumers and trimmers through whose hands the gallants passed when they were to visit the ladies. Those sweet artificers did every morning furnish the ladies' chambers with the spirit of roses, orange-flower water, and angelica; and to each of them gave a little precious casket, vapouring forth the most odoriferous exhalations of the choicest aromatical scents.

All their life was spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good, they did eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor to do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed,

DO WHAT THOU WILT.

Because men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint, they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of

servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us.

By this liberty they entered into a very laudable emulation to do all of them what they saw did please one. If any of the gallants or ladies should say, Let us drink, they would all drink. If any one of them said, Let us play, they all played. If one said, Let us go a-walking into the fields, they went all. If it were to go a-hawking or a-hunting, the ladies mounted upon dainty well-paced nags, seated in a stately palfrey saddle, carried on their lovely fists, miniardly begloved every one of them, either a sparrowhawk or a laneret or a marlin, and the young gallants carried the other kinds of hawks.

So nobly were they taught, that there was neither he nor she amongst them but could read, write, sing, play upon several musical instruments, speak five or six several languages, and compose in them all very quaintly, both in verse and prose. Never were seen so valiant knights, so noble and worthy, so dextrous and skilful both on foot and a-horseback, more brisk and lively, more nimble and quick, or better handling all manner of weapons than were there. Never were seen ladies so proper and handsome, so miniard and dainty, less forward or more ready with their hand and with their needle in every honest and free action belonging to that sex, than were there.

For this reason, when the time came that any man of the said abbey, either at the request of his parents, or for some other cause, had a mind to go out of it, he carried along with him one of the ladies, namely, her whom he had before that chosen for his mistress, and [they] were married together. And if they had formerly in Thélème lived in good devotion and amity, they did continue therein and increase it to a greater height in their state of matrimony; and did entertain that mutual love till the very last day of their life, in no less vigour and fervency than at the very day of their wedding.

CERVANTES AND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IDEALISM AND REALITY



DON QUIXOTE *moves on three levels of experience. First, it is a wild knockabout farce, full of the seventeenth-century equivalents for slapsticks and custard pies. Like the Keystone Comedy cops, who are shot or stabbed in highly vulnerable parts of their anatomy with no more ill effect than a leap in the air, an anguished yelp, and a clapping of the hand to the injured part, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza show the most fantastic capacity to undergo the most violent physical injuries without permanent damage. They can be tumbled rump over brainpan, tossed in blankets, thrown in the air by windmill sails, poked in the belly, trampled by sheep, bashed in the skull, beaten up and down the backbone, practically split open by overdoses of purgatives, and still, groaning through all their poultices and bandages, precipitate themselves into the next adventure and ask for more.*

Second, the story is a parody of courtly romance and the exaggerations of chivalry. How much bearing, Cervantes queries, on the real world in which men live have all these fantasies of crazy vigils and fanatical devotions, impossible ideals and incredible feats of valor? Don Quixote addling his brains by reading about Amadis of Gaul, Palmerin of England, and Orlando Furioso, and sallying forth on the roads of sixteenth-century Spain to perform deeds of knight-errantry, is a perfect symbol of the incongruity between the world of moonstruck idealism and the world of bread-and-butter fact. And is Don Quixote emulating Roland by doing mad things over the imaginary faithlessness of his mistress any more deranged than Roland muddying fountains, tearing up trees by the roots, and setting fire to houses? "For a knight-errant to run mad upon just occasion," the Don marvelously says, "is neither strange nor meritorious; the rarity is to run mad without a cause." So may his equally imaginary Dulcinea conceive "what I should perform in the wet, if I do so much in the dry."

But when Byron wrote, "Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away," he altogether ignored the book's deepest level of meaning. For though Don Quixote does begin, to be sure, both as farce and as a mocking caricature of chivalrous romance, as Cervantes sank himself into his creation it turned into something tenderer and sadder and wiser than that Miguel de Cervantes was no practical man of the world himself; his own career had been no monument to common sense. He had risen from a bed of fever to defy Turkish fire at the battle of Lepanto He had married a wife with no dowry, as a collector of wine and oil for the fleet he kept his accounts so inefficiently and trusted others so extravagantly that he was always in financial difficulties. For years he wooed an evasive literary success with heroic dramas and pastoral romances, enamored of the precise themes Don Quixote is presumed to ridicule. The very familiarity the Don shows with all the details of chivalrous romance proves how deep had been his creator's devotion. "How then," asks Joseph Wood Krutch, "could he ridicule Don Quixote without ridiculing himself, or how could he fail to sympathize with this man whose only fault was to find himself in a world which provided no opportunities for the exercise of the high and selfless principles which he wished to profess?"

Don Quixote *begins, no doubt, in rebellion against the will-o'-the-wisp that had kept its author a struggling and impoverished failure all his life. The satire is self-satire, Cervantes with a rueful grin subjecting his Knight of the Rueful Countenance to a series of burlesque misfortunes which are*

only parodies of the defeats he has known himself. It is with a kind of poetic justice that he inflicts drubbings and indignities upon the character of the story who is his own alter ego, punishing him symbolically for his own foolish ignorance of the world. But one cannot remake one's entire nature at the age of fifty-six. Cervantes might fancy in a moment of mocking disillusion that he could recant the nonsense of romance forever; he could not sustain the mood. The patronizing laughter grows troubled and uncertain, the pragmatic judgments grow more and more dubious; and what began in derision changes slowly into a lofty if comic justification of the very idealism it set out to deride.

No sensitive reader of Don Quixote *can long persist through its pages without feeling this. We begin by laughing at his absurd mishaps, the attacks on windmills seen as giants, the slaughter of sheep mistaken for armies, the interpretation of every inn into a castle, and the turning of kitchen wenches and harlots into great ladies and virgins. After a time, however, we learn to wince at the brutal beatings, the knocking out of his teeth, the cruel practical jokes of which he is the victim He never sees the facts as they are, but through all his delusions we gradually become aware of a daft nobility, an irrational purity of spirit, through which Don Quixote enters into a world that, although not the world of everyday fact, is somehow more important than that world. From then on, the action becomes tragicomic, and even the heartiest of our laughter is never far from pain.*

In making Don Quixote the symbol, however, for reaffirming an unconquerable idealism, Cervantes does not lose sight of prosaic reality, as chivalrous romance had done. The world he traverses is the material one that the Don is always forgetting and misinterpreting. The enchanted castles are all in his imagination, and the lovely melting virgins, the mighty potentates, the wizards and the giants. The material world is the world of Yanguesian carriers, stinking shepherds and goatherds, innkeepers, chain gangs of convict galley slaves, sluttish maidservants, traveling merchants: and Cervantes paints it in vivid picaresque detail. It is the world in which Sancho Panza feels at home, and in which he is more often right than his master.

These two, in fact, represent contrasted ways of looking upon the world, forever correcting and supplementing each other. Sancho lives in the greedy sense and always sees things "as they are"; Don Quixote among lofty ideal images of virtue of a world as it ought to be. Krutch's analysis of the fulling-mill episode searchingly demonstrates these dual planes of

reality. When Sancho mocks the Don for having mistaken the hammering uproar for the bellowing of giants, he replies: "Am I, who am a knight, bound to know the meaning of every mechanic noise, and distinguish between sound and sound? . . . But let the six fulling-mills be transformed into so many giants . . . and if I do not lay 'em at my feet with their heels upwards, then I'll give thee leave to exercise thy ill-bred raillery as much as thou pleasest." It is hard to deny the truth of this contention that courage is nobler than being able to tell the sound of a fulling-mill; and equally impossible not to perceive, with Sancho, that courage so divorced from common sense does little good. Cervantes' great achievement, Krutch well concludes, "is not so much that he could devise endless adventures for his Knight and Squire, but that in every one of them each character should be, as in the brief adventure just referred to, both right and wrong. Never by any chance does the Knight win; and yet never, in another sense, does he lose."

In the end, Sancho Panza, symbolic again of the practical man in all times, becomes reluctantly impressed by the idealist, awed, and half convinced that somewhere his ideal kingdom must exist in the world after all. And we too, seeing his blunders against a background as sharply realistic as might be revealed by any muckraking factualist, feel our throats swell with reverential and hopeless pity for the grandeur of this mad knight. He almost ceases, indeed, to be deranged, and becomes instead a conscious idealist deliberately affirming the ideal and refusing to allow his aspirations to be limited to the material plane. Don Quixote will stake his all on the faith that man is not merely a shrewder kind of animal but an aspiring spirit, and that at last he may create what he aspires to.

It is by a roundabout road indeed that Cervantes reaches that goal. He had first to see through his own toploftical romanticism and then in turn to see through the crude and intolerant empiricism born of his disillusion to the soul of truth within romantic ideals. When he has done so, his satire is able with deeper wisdom to bump the dreaming highflier down against the solid earth and to shame the pigsty realist out of the mire in which he has been wallowing. And this ironical and gentle wisdom he poured into the two equipoised and antithetical figures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

The remoter consequences of Cervantes' imaginative genius have been far-reaching. Later satirists have adapted his invention again and again. The burlesque knight whom he first devised is made ludicrously contempti-

ble in Butler's Hudibras *and touchingly foolish in Carroll's White Knight. The same figure, clad in less fantastic garments, but wearing still the same unworldly purity of soul in a world no less prickly with defeat, appears now as Parson Adams in Fielding's eighteenth-century England, now as Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's Russia, now as George Brush, the saintly traveling salesman of* Heaven's My Destination. *Some have been not unworthy of their great forerunner. But none has equaled his combination of comedy with a noble sweetness.*

DON QUIXOTE

*** The First Part of *Don Quixote* appeared in 1605, the Second in 1615. The translation used here is that of Peter Motteux, as revised by Ozell. The extracts quoted are from Book III, Chapters 4 and 6 ***

How Don Quixote Mistook Two Flocks of Sheep for Armies

WHEN Don Quixote, perceiving a thick cloud of dust arise right before them in the road, "The day is come," said he, turning to his squire, "the day is come, Sancho, that shall usher in the happiness which fortune has reserved for me: this day shall the strength of my arm be signalized by such exploits as shall be transmitted even to the latest posterity. See'st thou that cloud of dust, Sancho? It is raised by a prodigious army marching this way, and composed of an infinite number of nations."

"Why then, at this rate," quoth Sancho, "there should be two armies; for yonder's as great a dust on t'other side."

With that Don Quixote looked, and was transported with joy at the sight, firmly believing that two vast armies were ready to engage each other in that plain: for his imagination was so crowded with those battles, enchantments, surprising adventures, amorous thoughts, and other whimsies which he had read of in romances, that his strong fancy changed everything he saw into what he desired to see; and thus he could not conceive that the dust was only raised by two large flocks of sheep that were going the same road from different parts, and could not be discerned till they were very near. He was so positive that they were two armies, that Sancho firmly believed him at last.

"Well, sir," quoth the squire, "what are we to do, I beseech you?"

"What should we do," replied Don Quixote, "but assist the weaker and the injured side? For know, Sancho, that the army which now moves towards us is commanded by the Great Alifanfaron, Emperor of the vast island of Taprobana. The other that advances behind us is his enemy, the King of the Garamantians, Pentapolin with the naked arm; so called, because he always enters into the battle with his right arm bare."

"Pray, sir," quoth Sancho, "why are these two great men going together by the ears?"

"The occasion of their quarrel is this," answered Don Quixote, "Alifanfaron, a strong pagan, is in love with Pentapolin's daughter, a very beautiful lady and a Christian. Now, her father refuses to give her in marriage to the heathen prince, unless he abjure his false belief and embrace the Christian religion."

"Burn my beard," said Sancho, "if Pentapolin ben't in the right on't, I'll stand by him, and help him all I may."

"I commend thy resolution," replied Don Quixote, " 'tis not only lawful but requisite; for there's no need *for being a knight to fight in such battles.*"

"I guessed as much," quoth Sancho. "But where shall we leave my ass in the meantime, that I may be sure to find him again after the battle, for I fancy you never heard of any man that ever charged upon such a beast."

" 'Tis true," answered Don Quixote, "and therefore I would have thee turn him loose, though thou wert sure never to find him again; for we shall have so many horses after we have got the day, that even Rozinante himself will be in danger of being changed for another." Then mounting to the top of a hillock, whence they might have seen both the flocks, had not the dust obstructed their sight, "Look yonder, Sancho," cried Don Quixote, "that knight whom thou see'st in the gilded arms, bearing in his shield a crowned lion couchant at the feet of a lady, is the valiant Laurealco, lord of the silver bridge. He in the armor powdered with flowers of gold, bearing three crows argent in a field azure, is the formidable Micocolembo, great Duke of Quiracia. That other of a gigantic size that marches on his right is the undaunted Brandabarbaran of Boliche, sovereign of the three Arabias; he's arrayed in a serpent's skin, and carries instead of a shield a huge gate, *which they say belonged to the Temple which Samson pulled down* at his death, when he revenged himself upon his enemies. But cast thy eyes on this side, Sancho, and at the head of t'other army see the ever victorious Timonel of Carcaiona, Prince of New Biscay, whose armor is quartered azure, vert, or, and argent, and who bears in his shield a cat or, in a field gules, with these four letters, MIAU, for a motto, being the beginning of his mistress's name, the beautiful Miaulina, daughter to Alphenìquen, Duke of Algarva. That other monstrous load upon the back of yonder wild horse, with arms as white as snow, and a shield without any device, is a Frenchman, new-created knight, called Pierre Papin, Baron of Utrick. He whom you see pricking that pied courser's flanks with his armed heels, is the mighty Duke of Nervia, Espartafilardo of the wood, bearing in his shield a field of pure azure, powdered with asparagus (esparrago) with this motto in Castilian, *Rastrea mi suerte*; Thus trails, or drags my fortune."

And thus he went on, naming a great number of others in both armies, to every one of whom his fertile imagination assigned arms, colors, impresses

and mottos, as readily as if they had really been that moment extant before his eyes.

Sancho listened to all this romantic muster roll as mute as a fish, with amazement, all that he could do was now and then to turn his head on this side and t'other side, to see if he could discern the knights and giants whom his master named. But at length not being able to discover any, "Why," cried he, "you had as good tell me it snows, the devil of any knight, giant, or man can I see, of all those you talk of now; who knows but all this may be witchcraft and spirits, like yesternight?"

"How!" replied Don Quixote. "Dost thou not hear their horses neigh, their trumpets sound, and their drums beat?"

"Not I," quoth Sancho. "I prick up my ears like a sow in the beans, and yet I can hear nothing but the bleating of sheep."

Sancho might justly say so indeed, for by this time the two flocks were got very near them.

"Thy fear disturbs thy senses," said Don Quixote, "and hinders thee from hearing and seeing right. But 'tis no matter; withdraw to some place of safety, since thou art so terrified, for I alone am sufficient to give the victory to that side which I shall favor with my assistance."

With that he couched his lance, slapped spurs to Rozinante, and rushed like a thunderbolt from the hillock into the plain. Sancho bawled after him as loud as he could. "Hold, sir," cried Sancho; "for heaven's sake come back. What do you mean? As sure as I am a sinner those you're going to maul are nothing but poor harmless sheep. Come back, I say. Woe be to him that begot me! Are you mad, sir? There are no giants, no knights, no cats, no asparagus gardens, no golden quarters, no what d'ye call 'ems. Does the Devil possess you? You're leaping over the hedge before you come at the stile. You're taking the wrong sow by the ear. Oh that I was ever born to see this day!"

But Don Quixote still riding on, deaf and lost to good advice, outroared his expostulating squire. "Courage, brave knights," cried he; "march up, fall on, all you who fight under the standard of the valiant Pentapolin with the naked arm: Follow me, and you shall see how easily I will revenge him on that infidel Alifanfaron of Taprobana"; and so saying, he charged the squadron of sheep with that gallantry and resolution that he pierced, broke, and put it to flight in an instant, charging through and through, not without a great slaughter of his mortal enemies, whom he laid at his feet, biting the ground and wallowing in their blood. The shepherds, seeing their sheep go to rack, called out to him; till finding fair means ineffectual, they unloosed their slings, and began to ply him with stones as big as their fists. But the

champion disdaining such a distant war, spite of their showers of stones, rushed among the routed sheep, trampling both the living and the slain in a most terrible manner, impatient to meet the general of the enemy, and end the war at once.

"Where, where art thou," cried he, "proud Alifanfaron? Appear! See here a single knight who seeks thee everywhere, to try now, hand to hand, the boasted force of thy strenuous arm, and deprive thee of life, as a due punishment for the unjust war which thou hast audaciously waged with the valiant Pentapolin."

Just as he had said this, while the stones flew about his ears, one unluckily lit upon his small ribs, and had like to have buried two of the shortest deep in the middle of his body. The knight thought himself slain, or at least desperately wounded, and therefore calling to mind his precious balsam, and pulling out his earthen jug, he clapped it to his mouth. But before he had swallowed a sufficient dose, souse comes another of those bitter almonds that spoiled his draught, and hit him so pat upon the jug, hand and teeth, that it broke the first, maimed the second, and struck out three or four of the last. These two blows were so violent that the boisterous knight, falling from his horse, lay upon the ground as quiet as the slain; so that the shepherds, fearing he was killed, got their flock together with all speed, and carrying away their dead, which were no less than seven sheep, they made what haste they could out of harm's way, without looking any farther into the matter.

All this while Sancho stood upon the hill, where he was mortified upon the sight of this mad adventure. There he stamped and swore, and banned his master to the bottomless pit, he tore his beard for madness, and cursed the moment he first knew him. But seeing him at last knocked down, and settled, the shepherds being scampered, he thought he might venture to come down; and found him in a very ill plight, though not altogether senseless.

"Ah! Master," quoth he, "this comes of not taking my counsel. Did not I tell you 'twas a flock of sheep, and no army?"

"Friend Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "know 'tis any easy matter for necromancers to change the shapes of things as they please. Thus that malicious enchanter, who is my inveterate enemy, to deprive me of the glory which he saw me ready to acquire, while I was reaping a full harvest of laurels, transformed in a moment the routed squadrons into sheep. If thou wilt not believe me, Sancho, yet do one thing for my sake, do but take thy ass, and follow those supposed sheep at a distance, and I dare engage thou shalt soon see them resume their former shapes, and appear such as I described them. But stay, do not go yet, for I want thy assistance. Draw near,

and see how many cheek-teeth and others I want, for by the dreadful pain in my jaws and gums, I fear there's a total dilapidation in my mouth."

With that the knight opened his mouth as wide as he could, while the squire gaped to tell his grinders, with his snout almost in his chaps; but just in that fatal moment the balsam that lay wambling and fretting in Don Quixote's stomach, came up with an unlucky hiccough; and with the same violence that the powder flies out of a gun, all that he had in his stomach discharged itself upon the beard, face, eyes, and mouth of the officious squire. "Santa Maria!" cried poor Sancho, "what will become of me! My master is a dead man! He's vomiting his very heart's blood!"

But he had hardly said this, when the color, smell, and taste soon undeceived him; and finding it to be his master's loathsome drench, it caused such a sudden rumbling in his maw, that before he could turn his head he unladed the whole cargo of his stomach full in his master's face, and put him in as delicate a pickle as he was himself. Sancho having thus paid him in his own coin, half blinded as he was, ran to his ass, to take out something to clean himself and his master. But when he came to look for his wallet, and found it missing, not remembering till then that he had unhappily left it in the inn, he was ready to run quite out of his wits. He stormed and stamped, and cursed him worse than before, and resolved with himself to let his master go to the Devil, and e'en trudge home by himself, though he was sure to lose his wages, and his hopes of being governor of the promised island.

Thereupon Don Quixote got up with much ado, and clapping his left hand before his mouth, that the rest of his loose teeth might not drop out, he laid his right hand on Rozinante's bridle (for such was the good nature of the creature, that he had not budged a foot from his master); then he crept along to Squire Sancho, that stood lolling on his ass's panel, with his face in the hollow of both his hands, in a doleful moody melancholy fit.

"Friend Sancho," said he, seeing him thus abandoned to sorrow, "learn of me, that one man is no more than another, if he do no more than what another does. All these storms and hurricanes are but arguments of the approaching calm. Better success will soon follow our past calamities."

How Don Quixote Did Vigil Through a Night of Strange Enchantment

They had not gone above two hundred paces before they heard a noise of a great waterfall; which was to them the most welcome sound in the world. But then listening with great attention to know on which side the

grateful murmur came, they on a sudden heard another kind of noise that strangely allayed the pleasure of the first, especially in Sancho, who was naturally fearful, and pusillanimous. They heard a terrible din of obstreperous blows, struck regularly, and a more dreadful rattling of chains and irons, which together with the roaring of the waters, might have filled any other heart but Don Quixote's with terror and amazement. Add to this the horrors of a dark night and solitude, in an unknown place, the loud rustling of the leaves of some lofty trees, under which fortune brought them at the same unlucky moment, the whistling of the wind, which concurred with the other dismaying sounds; the fall of the waters, the thundering thumps and the clinking of chains aforesaid. The worst too was that the blows were redoubled without ceasing, the wind blowed on, and daylight was far distant. But then it was, Don Quixote, secured by his intrepidity (his inseparable companion), mounted his Rozinante, braced his shield, brandished his lance, and showed a soul unknowing fear, and superior to danger and fortune.

"Know, Sancho," cried he, "I was born in this Iron Age, to restore the Age of Gold, or the Golden Age, as some choose to call it. I am the man for whom fate has reserved the most dangerous and formidable attempts, the most stupendous and glorious adventures, and the most valorous feats of arms. Do but observe, O thou my faithful squire, what a multifarious assemblage of terrors surrounds us! A horrid darkness, a doleful solitude, a confused rustling of leaves, a dismal rattling of chains, a howling of the winds, an astonishing noise of cataracts, that seem to fall with a boisterous rapidity from the steep mountains of the moon, a terrible sound of redoubled blows, still wounding our ears like furious thunderclaps, and a dead and universal silence of those things that might buoy up the sinking courage of frail mortality. In this extremity of danger, Mars himself might tremble with the affright. Yet I, in the midst of all these unutterable alarms, still remain undaunted and unshaken."

When Sancho heard his master talk thus, he fell a-weeping in the most pitiful manner in the world.

"Pray, sir," cried he, "why will you thus run yourself into mischief? What need you go about this rueful misventure? 'Tis main dark, and there's ne'er a living soul sees us; we have nothing to do but to sheer off, and get out of harm's way, though we were not to drink a drop these three days. Who is there to take notice of our flinching? I've heard our parson, whom you very well know, say in his pulpit, that he who seeks danger perishes therein. And therefore we should not tempt heaven by going about a thing that we cannot compass but by a miracle. Dear Master, don't be so hard-hearted, and if you won't be persuaded not to meddle with this ungracious

adventure, do but put it off till daybreak, to which, according to the little skill I learned when a shepherd, it can't be above three hours, for the muzzle of the lesser bear is just over our heads, and makes midnight in the line of the left arm."

"How, canst thou see the muzzle of the bear?" asked Don Quixote "There's not a star to be seen in the sky."

"That's true," quoth Sancho; "but fear is sharpsighted, and can see things under ground, and much more in the skies."

"Let day come, or not come, 'tis all one to me," cried the champion, "it shall never be recorded of Don Quixote that either tears or entreaties could make him neglect the duty of a knight."

Sancho finding his master obstinate, and neither to be moved with tears nor good advice, resolved to try a trick of policy to keep him there till daylight. And accordingly, while he pretended to fasten the girths, he slyly tied Rosinante's hinder legs with his ass's halter, without being so much as suspected; so that when Don Quixote thought to have moved forwards he found his horse would not go a step without leaping, though he spurred him on smartly.

Sancho perceiving his plot, "Look you, sir," quoth he, "heaven's o' my side, and won't let Rozinante budge a foot forwards, and now if you'll still be spurring him, I dare pawn my life, 'twill be but striving against the stream, or, as the saying is, but kicking against the pricks."

Don Quixote fretted and chafed, and raved, and was in a desperate fury, to find his horse so stubborn; but at last, observing that the more he spurred and galled his sides, the more resty he proved, he, though unwillingly, resolved to have patience till 'twas light. "Well," said he, "since Rozinante will not leave this place, I must tarry in't till the dawn, though its slowness will cost me some sighs."

Much about this time, whether it were the coolness of the night, or that Sancho had eaten some loosening food at supper, or, which seems more probable, that nature, by a regular impulse, gave him notice of her desire to perform a certain function that follows the third concoction; it seems, honest Sancho found himself urged to do that which nobody could do for him. But such were his fears that he durst not for his life stir the breadth of a straw from his master, yet to think of bearing the intolerable load that pressed him so was to him as great an impossibility.

In this perplexing exigency (with leave be it spoken), he could find no other expedient but to take his right hand from the crupper of the saddle, and softly untying his breeches, let them drop down to his heels; having done this, he as silently took up his shirt, and exposed his posteriors, which

were none of the least, to the open air. But the main point was how to ease himself of this terrible burden without making a noise, to which purpose he clutched his teeth close, screwed up his face, shrunk up his shoulders, and held in his breath as much as possible. Yet see what misfortunes attend the best-projected undertakings! When he had almost compassed his design, he could not hinder an obstreperous sound, very different from those that caused his fear, from unluckily bursting out.

"Hark!" cried Don Quixote, who heard it, "what noise is that, Sancho?"

"Some new adventures I'll warrant you," quoth Sancho, "for ill luck, you know, seldom comes alone." Having passed off the thing thus, he e'en ventured t'other strain, and did it so cleverly that without the least rumor or noise his business was done effectually, to the unspeakable ease of his body and mind.

But Don Quixote having the sense of smelling as perfect as that of hearing, and Sancho standing so very near, or rather tacked to him, certain fumes, that ascended perpendicularly, began to regale his nostrils with a smell not so grateful as amber. No sooner the unwelcome steams disturbed him, but having recourse to the common remedy, he stopped his nose, and then, with a snuffling voice, "Sancho," said he, "thou art certainly in great bodily fear."

"So I am," quoth Sancho; "but what makes your worship perceive it now more than you did before?"

"Because," replied Don Quixote, "thou smellest now more unsavorily than thou didst before."

This discourse, such as it was, served them to pass away the night, and now Sancho, seeing the morning arise, thought it time to untie Rozinante's feet, and do up his breeches; and he did both with so much caution that his master suspected nothing. As for Rozinante, he no sooner felt himself at liberty, but he seemed to express his joy by pawing the ground; for, with his leave be it spoken, he was a stranger to curveting and prancing. Don Quixote also took it as a good omen that his steed was now ready to move, and believed it was a signal given him by kind fortune, to animate him to give birth to the approaching adventure.

After they had gone a pretty way under a pleasing covert of chestnut trees, they came into a meadow adjoining to certain rocks, from whose top there was a great fall of waters. At the foot of those rocks they discovered certain old ill-contrived buildings that rather looked like ruins than inhabited houses; and they perceived that the terrifying noise of the blows, which yet continued, issued out of that place. When a little farther, at the doubling of the point of a rock, they plainly discovered (kind reader, do

not take it amiss) six huge fulling-mill hammers, which interchangeably thumping several pieces of cloth, made the terrible noise that caused all Don Quixote's anxieties and Sancho's tribulation that night.

Don Quixote was struck dumb at this unexpected sight, and was ready to drop from his horse with shame and confusion. Sancho stared upon him, and saw him hang down his head, with a desponding dejected countenance, like a man quite dispirited with this cursed disappointment. At the same time he looked upon Sancho, and seeing by his eyes, and his cheeks swelled with laughter, that he was ready to burst, he could not forbear laughing himself in spite of all his vexation, so that Sancho seeing his master begin, immediately gave a loose to his mirth, and broke out into such a fit of laughing that he was forced to hold his sides with both his knuckles, for fear of bursting his aching paunch.

Four times he ceased, and four times renewed his obstreperous laughing, which sauciness Don Quixote began to resent with great indignation; and the more when Sancho, in a jeering tone, presumed to ridicule him with his own words, repeating part of the vain speech he made when first they heard the noise; *"Know, Sancho, I was born in this Iron Age to restore the Age of Gold. I am the man for whom heaven has reserved the most dangerous and glorious adventures, etc."* Thus he went on, till his master, dreadfully enraged at his insolence, hit him two such blows on the shoulders with his lance that had they fallen upon his head they had saved Don Quixote the trouble of paying him his wages, whatever he must have done to his heirs. Thereupon Sancho, finding his jest turned to earnest, begged pardon with all submission: "Mercy, good your worship," cried he, "spare my bones, I beseech you! I meant no harm, I did but joke a little."

"And because you joke, I do not," cried Don Quixote. "Come hither, good Mr. Jester, you who pretend to rally, tell me, had this been a dangerous adventure, as well as it proves only a false alarm, have I not shown resolution enough to undertake and finish it? Am I, who am a knight, bound to know the meaning of every mechanic noise, and distinguish between sound and sound? Besides, it might happen, as really it is, that I had never seen a fulling-mill before, though thou, like a base scoundrel as thou art, wert born and brought up among such mean implements of drudgery. But let the six fulling-hammers be transformed into so many giants, and then set them at me one by one, or all together; and if I do not lay them at my feet with their heels upwards, then I'll give thee leave to exercise thy ill-bred raillery as much as thou pleasest."

SATIRIC OVERTONES IN SHAKESPEARE



SHAKESPEARE is not traditionally ranked as a satirist. There is often attributed to him a sweetness, buoyancy, and serenity foreign to the tone of satire: "Gentle" Shakespeare, "Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child," "Thou smilest and art still, out-topping knowledge." Further, the dramatist is conceived of as having merged himself so entirely in the human beings whom he portrays that he voices no judgment of them, only reveals them like God revealing the world so that in all that universal range, from the exquisite absurdity of Bottom, the highhearted wit of Rosalind, and the Rabelaisian laughter of Falstaff, to the world-weary questioning of Hamlet and the appalling agonies of Lear, there is at once the deepest understanding and an absolute impersonality.

Nor is such a judgment utterly without foundation. Shakespeare does not stack the cards of his moral universe by opposing deep-dyed scoundrels to spotless heroines and heroes. Our sympathy with Hamlet does not make us hate Gertrude and Claudius, nor the blackness of Macbeth's cruelty and treachery prevent our pitying the lonely hatred through which he struggles to his doom The gentle Cordelia is not without a tinge of her father's

obstinacy; the saintly Isabella of Measure for Measure is more than a little priggish and self-righteous, Lear is not a model father. Even the horrible Regan and Goneril have some just resentments, and the monstrous Edmund a case to defend his villainy. Shakespeare is no Juvenalian moralist scourging his characters with whips of scorpions.

A great deal of Shakespeare's comedy is a warm and loving nonsensicality that carries no sting of criticism. Launce, Dogberry, Moth, Launcelot Gobbo, are drawn laughably but not contemptuously; the antics of Quince, Snout, Starveling, and Snug, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, are not intended to make us disdain these simpletons. The repartee of Beatrice and Benedick, in Much Ado About Nothing, is high-spirited abuse, not satire. The slapstick imbroglios of the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios in The Comedy of Errors sustain no thread of scornful comment. True, Shakespeare is constantly exchanging merry glances with us over all these characters' heads, but he is not withdrawing his sympathies, nor inviting us to withdraw ours, either from them or from the qualities in them by which we are amused

Such a withdrawal, however, is the ambiguous and distinguishing mark within the very heart of satire. Whether it denounces or only mocks, satire is alien and external to its victims. It laughs at and against, it banishes the objects of its criticism beyond the reach of our sympathy. Even when the satirist attacks faults he knows to be within himself, he establishes as it were a division, decrees the evil to be a foreign growth that is no part of the essential reality that is himself. There is the real self, that sees truth and loves goodness, and there is this absurd or morbid infection, that must be cast into the outer darkness. Satire alienates itself from the objects of its scorn or derision, and it alienates us from them.

Now, Shakespeare is too purely a dramatist to be consistently a satirist. He sees too deeply, and, most important of all, with too loving an understanding, into the hearts of men, to alienate himself utterly, even when they do very dreadful things His sense of the whole tortured, ludicrous dilemma of human existence submerges his just hatred of evil, so that Shylock is dismissed from the scene almost with pity, and the ignoble jealousy of Othello rendered less hateful by the remorse and the grandeur with which Othello pronounces justice on himself. But satire, even when it takes the dramatic form, judges not the cause but the consequence; and on it gives sentence of mockery or contempt.

Although Shakespeare's enormous variety and vitality of imaginative

insight could not be contained within any one literary mold, he left no major form unexplored; and satire too came within his range. Few of his plays are pure satire. Love's Labour's Lost *is: it attacks pedantic learning and the monastic ideal of cloistered contemplation as against direct experience of the world:*

> *Small have continual plodders ever won*
> *Save base authority from others' books.*

Life and nature are the true sources of wisdom, in which women and their love, far from being the irrelevant distraction Ferdinand, Dumain, and Longaville in the play believe, have a role nothing short of essential Troilus and Cressida *and* Coriolanus *are also satire, although in the former Hector speaks with such noble dignity and Troilus laments his loss with such pathos that readers have sometimes been misled into thinking that it was only the Greeks, the doltish Ajax and the peevish Achilles, whom Shakespeare was satirizing. And the cynical mood of these two plays moves into the ferocious satire of* Timon of Athens, *with the once-opulent Timon summoning his false friends to a mock banquet and throwing in their faces the bowls of warm water that have been served instead of luxurious dishes. Shakespeare thus ranges all the way from comical satire to tragic satire.*

More than this, there is hardly a play, no matter what its mood, in which satire is not represented In Twelfth Night *Shakespeare lampoons the cowardly and fatuous Sir Andrew Aguecheek and fairly whips the upstart and self-infatuated Malvolio from the stage.* As You Like It *merrily derides the pastoral romance, with Silvius and Phebe the lovesick swain and scornful maiden of convention; throws in for good measure Rosalind's lively mockery of romantic courtship; then adds on top of that the dyspeptic satire of the malcontent Jaques, with Touchstone as a shrewd commentator on them all. The laughter directed against Shallow and Slender, the two country justices in the second part of Henry IV and in* The Merry Wives of Windsor, *is satiric laughter; and much of the fun of Nym and Pistol is derived from showing up the windy and horrendous boastfulness of Pistol, the dark and terrifying understatements of Nym, and the cowardice of both.*

Mercutio shows us the witty and sparkling mocker making his way over into the realm of tragedy. In his fantastic and bravura description of Queen Mab, he slyly tells how

Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then he dreams of smelling out a suit:
And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice.

And his remarks on Tybalt as a swordsman are a brilliant deflation of the fashionable Italianate style of dueling·

"O! he is the courageous captain of complements. He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause. Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso; the hay!—— The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fantasticoes, these new tuners of accents!"

Falstaff is both the purveyor and the object of satire. In his own person, and not without his own connivance, he shows up the vices of gluttony, drinking, greed, dishonesty, cowardice, boasting, and mendacity. But Falstaff's great gift is that he sees through everything, including himself, and is therefore no less vastly amused to make a jest of himself than to unmask the world. Observe the two-way thrusts by which, on the field of battle, he rationalizes his own fears.

"Well, 'tis no matter, honor pricks me on. Yes, but how if honor prick me off when I come on. How then? Can honor set to a leg? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honor? A word. What is that word honor? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honor is a mere scutcheon—and so ends my catechism."

Is it Falstaff or the pomp of military glory that bears off the honors here?

It is not easy to represent Shakespeare's satire by any single scene or group of scenes. The plays that are prevailingly satire need their full scale of development to make the satire clear. In the others, satire is more often a note of accent in a speech here and there, a few words flashing out of the

dramatic movement of the whole, than it is an extended passage of dialogue. But the sonnet, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun," is a complete artistic whole, and a witty answer to all the nest of tuneful Petrarchan sonneteers choiring their ladies' perfections in Platonic ecstasies. Our scene from the first part of Henry IV, *where Prince Hal leads Falstaff into a trap, and reveals him as a coward and liar, is characteristic of Shakespeare's laughing satire. The scenes of Hamlet deriding old men, burlesquing Osric's ornate euphuisms to his face, and tearing the dignity of man himself to shreds, begin to sound the tone of tragic satire. And the Fool rebuking Lear for the insane stupidity of surrendering his kingdom to his daughters—a bitter fool truly—strikes out a wild and lamentable laughter satirically harmonious with the dreadful outcries of Lear upon the heath. Here satire transcends satire, and becomes pure horror.*

SHAKESPEARE

*** The *Sonnets* were not published until 1609, but they are supposed to have been written between 1591 and 1603, with the bulk of them centering around 1593-98. *Henry IV* was probably produced around 1598, *Hamlet* around 1600, and *King Lear* around 1605-06 ***

SONNET 130

Shakespeare Refuses to Praise His Mistress in Courtly Metaphors

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

HENRY IV

From Act II, Scene 4

Falstaff Fights Against a Hundred or So Opponents

The scene is the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap
Enter Falstaff, Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto; Francis following with wine

POINS. Welcome, Jack! Where hast thou been?

FALSTAFF. A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry, and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether stocks, and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant?

He drinketh

PRINCE. Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter, pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun? If thou didst, then behold that compound.

FALSTAFF. You rogue, here's lime in this sack too. There is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man; yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it. A villanous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There lives not three good men unhang'd in England; and one of them is fat and grows old. God help the while! A bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

PRINCE. How now, wool-sack! what mutter you?

FALSTAFF. A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild-geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales!

PRINCE. Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter?

FALSTAFF. Are not you a coward? Answer me to that, and Poins there?

POINS. 'Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee.

FALSTAFF. *I* call thee coward! I'll see thee damn'd ere I call thee coward, but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst You are straight enough in the shoulders, you care not who sees your back. Call

you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack. I am a rogue, if I drunk to-day.

PRINCE. O villain! thy lips are scarce wip'd since thou drunk'st last.

FALSTAFF. All's one for that. (*He drinketh.*) A plague of all cowards, still say I.

PRINCE. What's the matter?

FALSTAFF. What's the matter! There be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

PRINCE. Where is it, Jack, where is it?

FALSTAFF. Where is it! Taken from us it is; a hundred upon poor four of us.

PRINCE. What, a hundred, man?

FALSTAFF. I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through, my sword hack'd like a hand-saw—*ecce signum!* I never dealt better since I was a man; all would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak; if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

PRINCE. Speak, sirs, how was it?

GADSHILL. We four set upon some dozen—

FALSTAFF. Sixteen at least, my lord.

GADSHILL. And bound them.

PETO. No, no, they were not bound.

FALSTAFF. You rogue, they were bound, every man of them, or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

GADSHILL. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us—

FALSTAFF. And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

PRINCE. What, fought you with them all?

FALSTAFF. All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish. If there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legg'd creature.

PRINCE. Pray God you have not murd'red some of them.

FALSTAFF. Nay, that's past praying for; I have pepper'd two of them. Two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward: here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—

PRINCE. What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.

FALSTAFF. Four, Hal; I told thee four.

POINS. Ay, ay, he said four.

FALSTAFF. These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

PRINCE. Seven? why, there were but four even now.

FALSTAFF. In buckram?

POINS. Ay, four, in buckram suits.

FALSTAFF. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

PRINCE. Prithee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

FALSTAFF. *Dost thou hear me, Hal?*

PRINCE. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

FALSTAFF. Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

PRINCE. So, two more already.

FALSTAFF. Their points being broken,—

POINS. Down fell their hose.

FALSTAFF. Began to give me ground; but I followed me close, came in foot and hand, and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

PRINCE. O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!

FALSTAFF. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me, for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

PRINCE. These lies are like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brain'd guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-catch,—

FALSTAFF. What, art thou mad? art thou mad? Is not the truth the truth?

PRINCE. Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? Come, tell us your reason, what say'st thou to this?

POINS. Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

FALSTAFF. What, upon compulsion? 'Zounds, an I were at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! If reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

PRINCE. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin. This sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse-back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh,—

FALSTAFF. 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stockfish! O for breath to utter what is like thee! you tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing-tuck,—

PRINCE. Well, breathe a while, and then to it again, and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this:—

POINS. Mark, Jack.

PRINCE. We two saw you four set on four and bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four; and, with a word, out-fac'd you from your prize, and have it, yea, and can show it you here in the house; and, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roar'd for mercy, and still run and roar'd, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

POINS. Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now?

FALSTAFF. By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters. Was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct, the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life, I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors! Watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you!

HAMLET

From Act II, Scene 2

Hamlet Insults Polonius, Baits Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and Wearies of the World

The scene is a room in the castle at Elsinore. Polonius is on the stage
Enter Hamlet, reading

POLONIUS. O, give me leave: how does my good Lord Hamlet?
HAMLET. Well, God-a-mercy.
POLONIUS. Do you know me, my lord?
HAMLET. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.
POLONIUS. Not I, my lord.
HAMLET. Then I would you were so honest a man.
POLONIUS. Honest, my lord?
HAMLET. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.
POLONIUS. That's very true, my lord.
HAMLET. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?
POLONIUS. I have, my lord.
HAMLET. Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to 't.
POLONIUS (*aside*). How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: Yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this. I'll speak to him again —What do you read, my lord?
HAMLET. Words, words, words.
POLONIUS. What is the matter, my lord?
HAMLET. Between who?
POLONIUS. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.
HAMLET. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and po-

tently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POLONIUS (*aside*). Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET. Into my grave.

POLONIUS. Indeed, that's out of the air. (*Aside*) How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS. Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET. These tedious old fools.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

POLONIUS. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet, there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ (*to Polonius*). God save you, sir!

Exit Polonius

GUILDENSTERN. My honored lord!

ROSENCRANTZ. My most dear lord!

HAMLET. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

ROSENCRANTZ. As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET. Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ. Neither, my lord.

HAMLET. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?

GUILDENSTERN. Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET. In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near. but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN. Prison, my lord!

HAMLET. Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ. Then is the world one.

HAMLET. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROSENCRANTZ. We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN. Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET. A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ. }
GUILDENSTERN. } We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ. To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

HAMLET. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN. What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color· I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ. To what end, my lord?

HAMLET. That you must teach me But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

ROSENCRANTZ *(aside to Guildenstern)*. What say you?

HAMLET *(aside)*. Nay then, I have an eye of you.—
If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET. I will tell you why, so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have

of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

FROM ACT V, SCENE 2

Hamlet Parodies Osric's Euphuisms to His Face

A hall in the castle

Hamlet and Horatio are together. Enter Osric

OSRIC. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this waterfly?

HORATIO. No, my good lord.

HAMLET. Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile. let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a clough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

OSRIC. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

HAMLET. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

OSRIC. I thank your lordship, it is very hot

HAMLET. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

OSRIC. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

OSRIC. Exceedingly, my lord, it is very sultry, as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter—

HAMLET. I beseech you, remember—

Hamlet moves him to put on his hat

OSRIC. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

HAMLET. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSRIC. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAMLET. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSRIC. Sir?

HORATIO. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do 't, sir, really.

HAMLET. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC. Of Laertes?

HORATIO. His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

HAMLET. Of him, sir.

OSRIC. I know you are not ignorant—

HAMLET. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

OSRIC. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

HAMLET. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

OSRIC. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

HAMLET. What's his weapon?

OSRIC. Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET. That's two of his weapons· but, well.

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses· against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET. What call you the carriages?

HORATIO I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

OSRIC. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this "imponed," as you call it?

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits· he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET. How if I answer "no"?

OSRIC. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC. Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

HAMLET. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC. I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET. Yours, yours. (*Exit Osric.*) He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

HORATIO. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET. He did comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

KING LEAR

«« From Act I, Scene 4 »»

The Fool Reads Lear a Lesson on Parting with His Crown

A hall in the Duke of Albany's palace

Lear and Kent have been talking together; enter Oswald, Goneril's Steward

LEAR You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

OSWALD. So please you,— *Exit*

LEAR What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. (*Exit a Knight.*) Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter Knight

How now! where's that mongrel?

KNIGHT. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

LEAR. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

KNIGHT. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

LEAR. He would not!

KNIGHT. My lord, I know not what the matter is, but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appear as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

LEAR. Ha! sayest thou so?

KNIGHT. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

LEAR. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretense and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into 't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

KNIGHT. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

LEAR. No more of that, I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. (*Exit an Attendant.*) Go you, call hither my fool. *Exit an Attendant*

Re-enter Oswald

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

OSWALD. My lady's father.

LEAR. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

OSWALD. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

LEAR. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal? *Striking him*

OSWALD. I'll not be struck, my lord.

KENT. Nor tripped neither, you base foot-ball player.
Tripping up his heels

LEAR. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

KENT. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you wisdom? so. *Pushes Oswald out*

LEAR. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.
Giving Kent money

Enter Fool

FOOL. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.
Offering Kent his cap

LEAR. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

FOOL. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

KENT. Why, fool?

FOOL. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favor: nay, as thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou 'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb: why, this fellow hath banished two on 's daughters, and done the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

LEAR. Why, my boy?

FOOL. If I gave them all my living, I 'ld keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

LEAR. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

FOOL. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out, when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

LEAR. A pestilent gall to me!

FOOL. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

LEAR. Do.

FOOL. Mark it, nuncle:

> Have more than thou showest,
> Speak less than thou knowest,
> Lend less than thou owest,
> Ride more than thou goest,
> Learn more than thou trowest,

Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

KENT. This is nothing, fool.

FOOL. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer, you gave me nothing for 't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

LEAR. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

FOOL (*to Kent*). Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

LEAR. A bitter fool!

FOOL. Dost thou know the difference, my boy,
Between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

LEAR. No, lad, teach me.

FOOL. That lord that counsel'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me;
Do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

LEAR. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

FOOL. All thy other titles thou hast given away, that thou wast born with.

KENT. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

FOOL. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on 't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

LEAR. What two crowns shall they be?

FOOL. Why, after I have cut the egg in the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.
(*Singing*) Fools had ne'er less wit in a year,
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

LEAR. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

FOOL. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother. for when thou gavest them the rod and puttest down thine own breeches,

(*Singing*) Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

LEAR. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

FOOL. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou 'lt have me whipped for lying, and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i' the middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter Goneril

LEAR. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

FOOL. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. (*To Goneril.*) Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing.

Mum, mum:
He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,
Weary of all, shall want some.

(*Pointing to Lear*) That 's a shealed peascod.

DONNE AND DISILLUSION WITH ROMANTIC LOVE



DONNE'S *poetry has exerted a strange fascination over readers in recent years. His tortured doubts and disillusions and cynical disgusts made him seem a prophetic mirror of the frustrations and bitterness that were an angry counterpoint to the jazz triumphs of the 1920's. He was, as Hugh I'Anson Fausset observes, "one of the first men of genius to express, with frenzied penetration, that state of discord and disintegration" into which men fall when critical self-consciousness robs them of their harmony with nature T. S. Eliot's Prufrock, Hamletizing among the teacups, and his Burbank elegizing the glories of Venice while the vulgar Bleistein ogles the Princess Volupine, are enfeebled descendants of Donne, gelded of his flaming and virile rebellion, Joseph Wood Krutch's forlorn Hellenistic rendering of "the modern temper" a plaintive variation on Donne's angry despair.*

But the bitterness with which Donne looks on the world often seems only an extension of the peculiar exasperation with which he is filled by women. Here too his voice has a modern ring It is like the sadism with which Aldous Huxley pursues the Rosies and Mary Thriplows and Virginia Maunciples of his novels by subjecting them to the most ferocious sexual

humiliations; like the submerged animus beneath Thurber's War Between the Sexes. Donne's hatred of women is an angry and romantic cynicism born of disillusion with romantic love: that strange compound mingling the sighs and swoonings of the troubadours, the medieval worship of the Virgin, the ardors of the body, and a queerly transformed Platonic mysticism. The rapt ethereality of the other Elizabethan lyricists hymning their Stellas and Ideas, Donne's tangled inner conflict distorts into furious accusations of stupidity, faithlessness, and lust.

His dilemma grows out of a struggle between cynicism and ideal desire. He would wish to believe that love reaches spiritual heights and that there is no antagonism between the soul and the body's urgency, but his own sensuality is too sharp a goad He would wish to believe that the woman who arouses his desire deserves his love, but feverishly oscillates between finding this one a brainless jabberer, that one a mercenary drab, a third a loose minx, and a fourth an ungrateful harpy who denies him her body only in order to see him suffer. Hence, twofold disillusion: women are wantons, and his love is only a crude itch for coupling From his own lust he tries to turn away his eyes, but it inflames the humiliations he feels inflicted upon him, and he pours out his resentment against the whole sex with redoubled venom.

This entire furious reaction against the idyllic convention of woman-worship Donne molds into a lyrical attack of extraordinary virulence and intellectual power. We do not know if Donne's mistresses were as bad as he says they were but if they were not, others have been; and even when they have not, men have sometimes felt them to be. Donne's sustained control of his structure, his glitter of paradox, his tortuous intricacy of analysis, and the emotional intensity beneath the wit, make these poems particular and personal but the mood they reflect is perpetually recurrent. No one but Donne could have written them, and probably half the human race has experienced their bitterness.

JOHN DONNE

*** Donne's *Poems* were not published until after his death in 1631, but most of the songs and sonnets were probably written around 1594 ***

He Ironizes About Woman's Constancy

Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day,
To-morrow when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say?
Wilt thou then antedate some new made vow?
Or say that now
We are not just those persons, which we were?
Or, that oaths made in reverential fear
Of Love, and his wrath, any may forswear?
Or, as true deaths true marriages untie,
So lovers' contracts, images of those,
Bind but till sleep, death's image, them unloose?
Or, your own end to justify,
For having purpos'd change, and falsehood, you
Can have no way but falsehood to be true?
Vain lunatic, against these 'scapes I could
Dispute, and conquer, if I would,
Which I abstain to do,
For by to-morrow, I may think so too.

He Complains That, Having Exhausted All Other Vices, Women Are Now Trying the Novelty of Faithfulness

I can love both fair and brown,
Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays,
Her who loves loneness best, and her who masks and plays,
Her whom the country form'd, and whom the town,
Her who believes, and her who tries,
Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
And her who is dry cork, and never cries;
I can love her, and her, and you and you,
I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you?
Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
Or doth a fear, that men are true, torment you?
Oh we are not, be not you so;
Let me, and do you, twenty know.
Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
Must I, who came to travail thorough you,
Grow your fixt subject, because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song,
And by Love's sweetest part, Variety, she swore
She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
She went, examin'd, and return'd ere long,
And said, alas, Some two or three
Poor heretics in love there be,
Which think to 'stablish dangerous constancy.
But I have told them, since you will be true,
You shall be true to them, who're false to you.

He Pretends a Series of Bequests That Symbolize His Mistress's Shortcomings

Before I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
Great love, some Legacies; Here I bequeath
Mine eyes to *Argus*, if mine eyes can see,
If they be blind, then Love, I give them thee;
My tongue to Fame; to Ambassadors mine ears;
To women or the sea, my tears.
Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore
By making me serve her who had twenty more,
That I should give to none, but such, as had too much before.

My constancy I to the planets give;
My truth to them, who at the Court do live;
Mine ingenuity and openness,
To Jesuits; to Buffoons my pensiveness;
My silence to any, who abroad hath been;
My money to a Capuchin.
Thou Love taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there, where no love receiv'd can be,
Only to give to such as have an incapacity.

My faith I give to Roman Catholics;
All my good works unto the Schismatics
Of Amsterdam: my best civility
And Courtship, to an University;
My modesty I give to soldiers bare;
My patience let gamesters share.
Thou Love taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts indignity.

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends; mine industry to foes;
To Schoolmen I bequeath my doubtfulness;
My sickness to Physicians, or excess,
To Nature, all that I in Rhyme have writ;
And to my company my wit.

Thou Love, by making me adore
Her, who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make, as though I gave, when I did but restore.

To him for whom the passing bell next tolls,
I give my physic books; my written rolls
Of Moral counsels, I to Bedlam give;
My brazen medals, unto them which live
In want of bread; to them which pass among
All foreigners, mine English tongue.
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion.

Therefore I'll give no more; but I'll undo
The world by dying; because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in Mines, where none doth draw it forth;
And all your graces no more use shall have
Than a Sun-dial in a grave.
Thou Love taught'st me, by making me
Love her, who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent, and practise this one way, to annihilate all three.

JONSON'S TERRIFYING CARICATURES OF REALITY

THE METHOD of Jonson is at the very antipodes from the method of Shakespeare. In Shakespeare's plays, as Lytton Strachey points out, "innumerable facets flash out quality after quality; the subtlest and most elusive shades of temperament are indicated; until at last the whole being takes shape before us, endowed with what seems to be the very complexity and mystery of life itself." Pressing after the fleeing travelers he has robbed, Falstaff shouts, "They hate us youth," and "What! ye knaves, young men must live." Could anyone have anticipated the exquisite inappropriateness of those words and the light they throw on the old ruffian?

Jonson, on the other hand, aims at only one sharply defined effect. From the beginning he bites his stylus deeper and deeper until the design stands out in brilliant light glowing against darkest shadow. "Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!" exclaims Volpone; the curtain opens to let the sun flood in through the window upon the glitter of massy plate, the sparkle of jewels, and piles of golden coins. In that moment, the keynote is struck, yellow gold and yellow greed, that never varies throughout the entire play Volpone exulting in images of luxury and filled with glee over the cupidity

that renders his dupes so easily vulnerable; Mosca darting back and forth, whispering allurements in their ears, and goading them and Volpone on; Voltore ready to lie and cheat, the doddering Corbaccio to disinherit his son, Corvino to debauch his wife, all in hopes of getting Volpone's hoard, every one of these, and every action of the play, has no other purpose than to paint this single vice of greed and its shining lure.

Volpone, in fact, has no characteristics except greed, guile, a derisive joy in the gullibility of his victims, and a lasciviousness closely related to greed. Vivid, limited, and grotesque, the same deliberate restriction in portrayal appears in all Jonson's characters, from Sir Epicure Mammon, in The Alchemist, feeding his imagination with enormous banquets of exotic delicacies and super-Roman orgies upon silken beds inflated with air, to the unhappy, noise-tormented Morose, of The Silent Woman. They are all "humours," single traits endowed with identity, rather than living and breathing human beings. One of Jonson's characters is at once mere caricature and the very core of a man stripped of all extraneous detail. The art Jonson practices is an art of classicism and it is an art of distortion. The very names proclaim the central qualities their bearers stand for: Mosca, the gadfly; Voltore, the vulture.

And yet, somehow or other, the energy of Jonson breathes into these masks a terrifying vitality. Mosca hissing and giggling, Volpone leaping out of the bedclothes and bounding across the stage, Corbaccio deaf, bleary-eyed, and drooling with avarice—ludicrous or dreadful, these figures convince with demonic power. Partly this springs from the sharp realism of surface with which they are drawn. Jonson has caught their precise mannerisms of speech and movement, painted their dress and the scenes through which they move in color-exact detail. But, deeper than that, except in such intentional farce as the sheer absurdity of Morose, Jonson seizes upon the very vitals of his characters. Though no human being is nothing but a monster like Volpone, the qualities for which Volpone and Corvino stand do exist, and they do the evil in the world that Jonson shows them doing.

The age in which Jonson was living sharpened his perception of human venality and baseness. Elizabeth was recently dead; the stammering, slobbering, pedantic, and clownish James I sat on England's throne, bombastically proclaiming the divine right of kings and feebly turning tail whenever Parliament grew rebellious. It was soon clear what the new reign was to be like. Extravagant favorites alternately cajoled and bullied their

ruler; politic flatterers wormed their way into influence; the court was glamorous with lovely ladies sweetly aware of the directions in which it paid to be generous with their charms. Elizabeth, for all her flaring and arbitrary Tudor temper, had been a shrewd administrator, a great ruler, a sharp judge of character and ability. James was a dupe of fools.

Jonson's tendency had always been toward a certain astringency of mind. The stepson of a bricklayer, he had made himself, not without difficulty, one of the most erudite dramatists of his day. He had seen the rough side of the world. His independent temper and hard-hitting plainness had got him in trouble more than once. The jealousies, rivalries, feuds, backbiting, and physical violences of London theatrical and literary life hardly served to suggest that even talent or genius necessarily produced elevation of character. Contact with the court may well have been no less salutary. Observation, common sense, and learning all combined to give Jonson a disillusioned view of mankind.

With much of Rabelais' toughness and ability to look unflinchingly at the crudest aspects of life, Jonson has little Rabelaisian geniality or lovingness The comedy of Volpone takes strong guts to swallow; it is bitter and violent, flaying its victims with a scourge of steel. But it is strong, too, and honest, and powerful. If Jonson does not share Rabelais' confidence in men's spontaneous goodness, he does believe in their capacity for shame and sanity. With a scorn that sears like a red-hot sword he will show them their clownish stupidities, their contemptible weaknesses, and their hideous vices Let them shrink back from the picture, he seems to say, let them scream in horror. And let them reform themselves. They can.

VOLPONE

⁂ *Volpone* was first produced in 1605. The two extracts given here are from Act I, Scene 1, and Act III, Scene 6 ⁂

Mosca Persuades Corbaccio to Disinherit His Son in Favor of Volpone

The scene is a room in Volpone's house. Volpone and Mosca are present

MOSCA. Keep you still, sir.
Here is Corbaccio.
VOLPONE. Set the plate away:
The vulture's gone, and the old raven's come!
MOSCA. Betake you to your silence, and your sleep.
Stand there and multiply. (*Putting the plate to the rest*)
Now, shall we see
A wretch who is indeed more impotent
Than this can feign to be; yet hopes to hop
Over his grave—
Enter Corbaccio
Signior Corbaccio!
You're very welcome, sir.
CORBACCIO. How does your patron?
MOSCA. Troth, as he did, sir, no amends.
CORBACCIO. What! mends he?
MOSCA. No, sir: he's rather worse.
CORBACCIO. That's well. Where is he?
MOSCA. Upon his couch, sir, newly fall'n asleep.
CORBACCIO. Does he sleep well?
MOSCA. No wink, sir, all this night.
Nor yesterday; but slumbers.
CORBACCIO. Good! he should take
Some counsel of physicians: I have brought him
An opiate here, from mine own doctor.
MOSCA. He will not hear of drugs.

CORBACCIO. Why? I myself
Stood by while it was made, saw all the ingredients:
And know, it cannot but most gently work:
My life for his, 'tis but to make him sleep.
VOLPONE (*aside*). Ay, his last sleep, if he would take it.
MOSCA. Sir,
He has no faith in physic.
CORBACCIO. Say you, say you?
MOSCA. He has no faith in physic: he does think
Most of your doctors are the greater danger,
And worse disease, to escape. I often have
Heard him protest, that your physician
Should never be his heir.
CORBACCIO. Not I his heir?
MOSCA. Not your physician, sir.
CORBACCIO. O, no, no, no,
I do not mean it.
MOSCA. No, sir, nor their fees
He cannot brook: he says, they flay a man,
Before they kill him.
CORBACCIO. Right, I do conceive you.
MOSCA. And then they do it by experiment;
For which the law not only doth absolve them,
But gives them great reward: and he is loth
To hire his death, so.
CORBACCIO. It is true, they kill
With as much license as a judge.
MOSCA. Nay, more;
For he but kills, sir, where the law condemns,
And these can kill him too.
CORBACCIO. Ay, or me;
Or any man. How does his apoplex?
Is that strong on him still?
MOSCA. Most violent.
His speech is broken, and his eyes are set,
His face drawn longer than 'twas wont—
CORBACCIO. How! how!
Stronger than he was wont?
MOSCA. No, sir, his face
Drawn longer than 'twas wont.
CORBACCIO. O, good!

MOSCA. His mouth
Is ever gaping, and his eyelids hang.
CORBACCIO. Good.
MOSCA. A freezing numbness stiffens all his joints,
And makes the colour of his flesh like lead.
CORBACCIO. 'Tis good.
MOSCA. His pulse beats slow, and dull.
CORBACCIO. Good symptoms still.
MOSCA. And from his brain—
CORBACCIO. I conceive you; good.
MOSCA. Flows a cold sweat, with a continual rheum,
Forth the resolved corners of his eyes.
CORBACCIO. Is't possible? Yet I am better, ha!
How does he, with the swimming of his head?
MOSCA. O, sir, 'tis past the scotomy, he now
Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort:
You hardly can perceive him, that he breathes.
CORBACCIO. Excellent, excellent! sure I shall outlast him:
This makes me young again, a score of years.
MOSCA. I was a coming for you, sir.
CORBACCIO. Has he made his will?
What has he given me?
MOSCA. No, sir.
CORBACCIO. Nothing! ha?
MOSCA. He has not made his will, sir.
CORBACCIO. Oh, oh, oh!
What then did Voltore, the lawyer, here?
MOSCA. He smelt a carcase, sir, when he but heard
My master was about his testament;
As I did urge him to it for your good—
CORBACCIO. He came unto him, did he? I thought so.
MOSCA. Yes, and presented him this piece of plate.
CORBACCIO. To be his heir?
MOSCA. I do not know, sir.
CORBACCIO. True:
I know it too.
MOSCA (*aside*). By your own scale, sir.
CORBACCIO. Well,
I shall prevent him, yet. See, Mosca, look,
Here, I have brought a bag of bright chequines,
Will quite weigh down his plate.

MOSCA (*taking the bag*). Yea, marry, sir.
This is true physic, this your sacred medicine;
No talk of opiates, to this great elixir!
CORBACCIO. 'Tis aurum palpabile, if not potabile.
MOSCA. It shall be minister'd to him, in his bowl.
CORBACCIO. Ay, do, do, do.
MOSCA. Most blessed cordial!
This will recover him.
CORBACCIO. Yes, do, do, do.
MOSCA. I think it were not best, sir.
CORBACCIO. What?
MOSCA. To recover him.
CORBACCIO. O, no, no, no; by no means.
MOSCA. Why, sir, this
Will work some strange effect, if he but feel it.
CORBACCIO. 'Tis true, therefore forbear; I'll take my venture:
Give me it again.
MOSCA. At no hand; pardon me:
You shall not do yourself that wrong, sir. I
Will so advise you, you shall have it all.
CORBACCIO. How?
MOSCA. All, sir; 'tis your right, your own no man
Can claim a part: 'tis yours, without a rival,
Decreed by destiny.
CORBACCIO. How, how, good Mosca?
MOSCA. I'll tell you, sir. This fit he shall recover.
CORBACCIO. I do conceive you.
MOSCA. And, on first advantage
Of his gain'd sense, will I re-importune him
Unto the making of his testament:
And shew him this. *Pointing to the money*
CORBACCIO. Good, good.
MOSCA. 'Tis better yet,
If you will hear, sir.
CORBACCIO. Yes, with all my heart.
MOSCA. Now, would I counsel you, make home with speed:
There, frame a will, whereto you shall inscribe
My master your sole heir.
CORBACCIO. And disinherit
My son!

MOSCA. O, sir, the better: for that colour
Shall make it much more taking.
CORBACCIO. O, but colour?
MOSCA. This will, sir, you shall send it unto me.
Now, when I come to inforce, as I will do,
Your cares, your watchings, and your many prayers,
Your more than many gifts, your this day's present,
And last, produce your will; where, without thought,
Or least regard, unto your proper issue,
A son so brave, and highly meriting,
The stream of your diverted love hath thrown you
Upon my master, and made him your heir:
He cannot be so stupid, or stone-dead,
But out of conscience, and mere gratitude—
CORBACCIO. He must pronounce me his?
MOSCA. 'Tis true.
CORBACCIO. This plot
Did I think on before.
MOSCA. I do believe it.
CORBACCIO. Do you not believe it?
MOSCA. Yes, sir.
CORBACCIO. Mine own project.
MOSCA. Which, when he hath done, sir—
CORBACCIO. Publish'd me his heir?
MOSCA. And you so certain to survive him—
CORBACCIO. Ay.
MOSCA. Being so lusty a man—
CORBACCIO. 'Tis true.
MOSCA. Yes, sir—
CORBACCIO. I thought on that too. See, how he should be
The very organ to express my thoughts!
MOSCA. You have not only done yourself a good—
CORBACCIO. But multiplied it on my son.
MOSCA. 'Tis right, sir.
CORBACCIO. Still, my invention.
MOSCA. 'Las, sir! heaven knows,
It hath been all my study, all my care,
(I e'en grow gray withal,) how to work things—
CORBACCIO. I do conceive, sweet Mosca.
MOSCA. You are he,
For whom I labour here.

CORBACCIO. Ay, do, do, do:
I'll straight about it. *Going*
MOSCA. Rook go with you, raven!
CORBACCIO. I know thee honest.
MOSCA (*aside*). You do lie, sir!
CORBACCIO. And–
MOSCA. Your knowledge is no better than your ears, sir.
CORBACCIO. I do not doubt, to be a father to thee.
MOSCA. Nor I to gull my brother of his blessing.
CORBACCIO. I may have my youth restored to me, why not?
MOSCA. Your worship is a precious ass!
CORBACCIO. What say'st thou?
MOSCA. I do desire your worship to make haste, sir.
CORBACCIO. 'Tis done, 'tis done; I go. *Exit*
VOLPONE (*leaping from his couch*). O, I shall burst!
Let out my sides, let out my sides–
MOSCA. Contain
Your flux of laughter, sir: you know this hope
Is such a bait, it covers any hook.
VOLPONE. O, but thy working, and thy placing it!
I cannot hold; good rascal, let me kiss thee:
I never knew thee in so rare a humour.
MOSCA. Alas, sir, I but do as I am taught;
Follow your grave instructions, give them words;
Pour oil into their ears, and send them hence.
VOLPONE. 'Tis true, 'tis true. What a rare punishment
Is avarice to itself!
MOSCA. Ay, with our help, sir.
VOLPONE. So many cares, so many maladies,
So many fears attending on old age,
Yea, death so often call'd on, as no wish
Can be more frequent with them, their limbs faint,
Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing, going,
All dead before them; yea, their very teeth,
Their instruments of eating, failing them:
Yet this is reckon'd life! nay, here was one,
Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer!
Feels not his gout, nor palsy; feigns himself
Younger by scores of years, flatters his age
With confident belying it, hopes he may,
With charms, like Æson, have his youth restored:

And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate
Would be as easily cheated on, as he,
And all turns air!

Corvino Offers His Wife, Celia, to Volpone as a Mistress

The scene is Volpone's chamber. Volpone is lying in his couch, Mosca sitting beside him. Corvino is shown in

MOSCA. Sir,
Signior Corvino, here, is come to see you.
VOLPONE. Oh!
MOSCA. And hearing of the consultation had,
So lately, for your health, is come to offer,
Or rather, sir, to prostitute—
CORVINO. Thanks, sweet Mosca.
MOSCA. Freely, unask'd, or unintreated—
CORVINO. Well.
MOSCA. As the true fervent instance of his love,
His own most fair and proper wife; the beauty,
Only of price in Venice—
CORVINO. 'Tis well urged.
MOSCA. To be your comfortress, and to preserve you.
VOLPONE. Alas, I am past, already! Pray you, thank him
For his good care and promptness; but for that,
'Tis a vain labour e'en to fight 'gainst heaven;
Applying fire to stone—uh, uh, uh, uh! *Coughing*
Making a dead leaf grow again. I take
His wishes gently, though; and you may tell him,
What I have done for him: marry, my state is hopeless.
Will him to pray for me; and to use his fortune
With reverence, when he comes to't.
MOSCA. Do you hear, sir?
Go to him with your wife.
CORVINO. Heart of my father!
Wilt thou persist thus? come, I pray thee, come.
Thou seest 'tis nothing, Celia. By this hand,
I shall grow violent. Come, do't, I say.

CELIA. Sir, kill me, rather: I will take down poison,
Eat burning coals, do any thing—
CORVINO. Be damn'd!
Heart, I will drag thee hence, home, by the hair;
Cry thee a strumpet through the streets; rip up
Thy mouth unto thine ears; and slit thy nose,
Like a raw rochet!—Do not tempt me; come,
Yield, I am loth—Death! I will buy some slave
Whom I will kill, and bind thee to him, alive;
And at my window hang you forth, devising
Some monstrous crime, which I, in capital letters,
Will eat into thy flesh with aquafortis,
And burning corsives, on this stubborn breast.
Now, by the blood thou hast incensed, I'll do it!
CELIA. Sir, what you please, you may, I am your martyr.
CORVINO. Be not thus obstinate, I have not deserved it:
Think who it is intreats you. 'Prithee, sweet,—
Good faith, thou shalt have jewels, gowns, attires,
What thou wilt think, and ask. Do but go kiss him.
Or touch him, but. For my sake.—At my suit.—
This once.—No! not! I shall remember this.
Will you disgrace me thus? Do you thirst my undoing? . . .
. . . S'death! if she would but speak to him,
And save my reputation, it were somewhat;
But spitefully to affect my utter ruin!
MOSCA. Ay, now you have put your fortune in her hands.
Why i'faith, it is her modesty, I must quit her.
If you were absent, she would be more cunning;
I know it: and dare undertake for her.
What woman can before her husband? 'pray you,
Let us depart, and leave her here.
CORVINO. Sweet Celia,
Thou may'st redeem all, yet; I'll say no more·
If not, esteem yourself as lost. Nay, stay there.
Shuts the door, and exit with Mosca
CELIA. O God, and his good angels! whither, whither,
Is shame fled human breasts? that with such ease,
Men dare put off your honours, and their own?
Is that, which ever was a cause of life,
Now placed beneath the basest circumstance,
And modesty an exile made, for money?

VOLPONE. Ay, in Corvino, and such earth-fed minds,
Leaping from his couch
That never tasted the true heaven of love.
Assure thee, Celia, he that would sell thee,
Only for hope of gain, and that uncertain,
He would have sold his part of Paradise
For ready money, had he met a cope-man.
Why art thou mazed to see me thus revived?
Rather applaud thy beauty's miracle;
'Tis thy great work: that hath, not now alone,
But sundry times raised me, in several shapes,
And, but this morning, like a mountebank,
To see thee at thy window ay, before
I would have left my practice, for thy love,
In varying figures, I would have contended
With the blue Porteus, or the horned flood.
Now art thou welcome.

CELIA. Sir!

VOLPONE. Nay, fly me not.
Nor let thy false imagination
That I was bed-rid, make thee think I am so:
Thou shalt not find it. I am, now, as fresh,
As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,
As when, in that so celebrated scene,
At recitation of our comedy,
For entertainment of the great Valois,
I acted young Antinous; and attracted
The eyes and ears of all the ladies present,
To admire each graceful gesture, note, and footing. *Sings*
Come, my Celia, let us prove,
While we can, the sports of love,
Time will not be ours for ever,
He, at length, our good will sever;
Spend not then his gifts in vain;
Suns, that set, may rise again;
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night.
Why should we defer our joys?
Fame and rumour are but toys.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies?

Or his easier ears beguile,
Thus removed by our wile?—
'Tis no sin love's fruits to steal:
But the sweet thefts to reveal,
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

CELIA. Some serene blast me, or dire lightning strike
This my offending face!

VOLPONE. Why droops my Celia?
Thou hast, in place of a base husband, found
A worthy lover: use thy fortune well,
With secrecy and pleasure. See, behold,
What thou art queen of; not in expectation,
As I feed others but possess'd and crown'd.
See, here, a rope of pearl; and each, more orient
Than that the brave Ægyptian queen caroused:
Dissolve and drink them. See, a carbuncle,
May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark;
A diamond, would have bought Lollia Paulina,
When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels.

CELIA. Good sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
And which, once lost, I have nought to lose beyond it,
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits:
If you have conscience—

VOLPONE. 'Tis the beggar's virtue;
If thou hast wisdom, hear me, Celia.
Thy baths shall be the juice of July-flowers,
Spirit of roses, and of violets,
The milk of unicorns, and panthers' breath
Gather'd in bags, and mixt with Cretan wines.
Our drink shall be prepared gold and amber;
Which we will take, until my roof whirl round
With the vertigo: and my dwarf shall dance,
My eunuch sing, my fool make up the antic,
Whilst we, in changed shapes, act Ovid's tales,
Thou, like Europa now, and I like Jove.

CELIA. If you have ears that will be pierced—or eyes
That can be open'd—a heart that may be touch'd—
Or any part that yet sounds man about you—

If you have touch of holy saints—or heaven—
Do me the grace to let me 'scape—if not,
Be bountiful and kill me. You do know,
I am a creature, hither ill betray'd,
By one, whose shame I would forget it were:
If you will deign me neither of these graces,
Yet feed your wrath, sir, rather than your lust,
(It is a vice comes nearer manliness,)
And punish that unhappy crime of nature,
Which you miscall my beauty. flay my face,
Or poison it with ointments, for seducing
Your blood to this rebellion. Rub these hands,
With what may cause an eating leprosy,
E'en to my bones and marrow: any thing,
That may disfavour me, save in my honour—
And I will kneel to you, pray for you, pay down
A thousand hourly vows, sir, for your health;
Report, and think you virtuous—

VOLPONE. Think me cold,
Frozen and impotent, and so report me?
That I had Nestor's hernia, thou wouldst think.
I do degenerate, and abuse my nation,
To play with opportunity thus long;
I should have done the act, and then have parley'd.
Yield, or I'll force thee. *Seizes her*

CELIA. O! just God!

VOLPONE. In vain—

BONARIO (*rushing in*). Forbear, foul ravisher, libidinous swine!
Free the forced lady, or thou diest, impostor.
But that I'm loth to snatch thy punishment
Out of the hand of justice, thou shouldst, yet,
Be made the timely sacrifice of vengeance,
Before this altar, and this dross, thy idol.—
Lady, let's quit the place, it is the den
Of villainy; fear nought, you have a guard:
And he, ere long, shall meet his just reward.

Exeunt Bonario and Celia

MOLIÈRE: SANITY TAKING THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD



THE FRONDE, *unlike the English Civil War, was almost entirely an aristocratic rebellion, only vaguely assisted by popular unrest in Paris It had small help from the middle class because, for the century preceding, the throne had made itself the buttress of mercantile prosperity. When it collapsed, the power of the nobility was crushed, and when the young Louis XIV took the reins of government in his own hands, in 1661, he made it a matter of deliberate policy to ensure that henceforth, like planets around the sun, the aristocracy should revolve around the crown. Nobles were encouraged to spend most of the year dancing attendance at court; balls, masquerades, ballets, opera, theatricals, hunting, gambling, pageantry, amorous dalliance, provided an unceasing round of pleasures for the gay and warm-blooded; decorations, dignities, titles, sinecures, pensions, flowed from the royal bounty to tempt the ambitious.*

Versailles was the center and symbol of this system. The huge, almost infinite building, with its terraces and balustrades, its mythological statues and fountains, its canals, pools, gardens, parterres, its great trees trans-

planted from distant forests; its innumerable apartments and enormous salons, carved, gilded, and glittering with mirrors, its grand staircases pouring downwards in marble cataracts; the monarch, with his red heels and towering periwig, surrounded by crowds of undulating courtiers—all this was more than a magnificent architectural structure and a pompous ritual. It was both a strategy and a cultural ideal. dictatorship dramatized, made grandiose, colorful, august, almost reasonable.

Molière moved in this splendid world, but he was not of it. The son of a prosperous upholsterer, his background was middle class. He received a good education at the Collège de Clermont, where the Prince de Conti, Chapelle, and Cyrano de Bergerac were among his fellow students; he is believed to have studied philosophy with Gassendi. But at the age of twenty-one he joined the obscure little company of actors that called itself the Illustre Théâtre. He endured debt and imprisonment; spent more than a dozen years moving about the provinces. Actors in the seventeenth century were in social position something between gypsies, charlatans, and strumpets; even a hundred years later the greatest actress of her day, Adrienne Lecouvreur, could not be buried in consecrated ground. In becoming an actor Molière not only renounced bourgeois conventionality, he automatically deprived himself of all social status. Even when, returning at last to Paris, he came under the protection of the King, he was a spectator looking upon a world of which he was not a part, an inferior privileged somewhat uncertainly by royal favor, but never an equal. His isolation helped Molière from being involved in the system he saw; in creating his scheme of values he called upon neither fashion nor convention, but common sense.

Common sense is indeed the key virtue in Molière, but a common sense so uncommon that only a few rare geniuses have ever possessed it. Whether he gazes at the glittering world of fops and marquises or at the world of middle-class tradesmen, his sanity is absolute. Nothing fooled or duped him, he saw through every variety of fake and pretentiousness. His Précieuses Ridicules, with their high-flown affectations, his Learned Ladies, with their pedantic and misplaced devotion to grammar and astronomy, the medical impostures of The Doctor Despite Himself and The Imaginary Invalid, the religious hypocrisy of Tartuffe, the legal chicaneries of a whole crew of notaries and advocates in comedy after comedy—how Molière blows their pretenses before him with a high wind of ridicule that buffets and overwhelms them in gales of laughter! The same extraordinary sanity lies beneath the mockery of his Bourgeois Gentleman and George Dandin,

both betrayed by social snobbery into trying to deny their own class and enter another.

Molière's distrust of the farfetched is only the negative side of his faith in the normal. Like Rabelais, he has confidence in the health and soundness of human instinct; like Rabelais he is suspicious of the shackles that perverted ingenuity, fear, or self-interest may devise The movement and well-being of the body, the enjoyment of eating and drinking, growth, laughter, learning, using one's powers, falling in love and marrying, the tenderness of parents for their children, and the affection of children for their parents· all these are natural and good. It is only when they grow gangrened with dogmatism, tyranny, or folly that they become bad.

Only then does Molière make them targets for his flights of salutary derision. Let the doctor begin believing that it is not his function to heal, but merely to make a living, that it is enough if he follows the traditional rules of his profession, that the patient is responsible for curing himself—and then Molière will be overwhelming him beneath strokes of annihilating satire. Let Orgon be hypnotized by Tartuffe and his own cowardly superstition into becoming blind and cruel to his own family, and Molière will pepper him with vollies of stinging arrows Let old men force themselves in marriage on unwilling young girls, husbands domineer over wives or wives nag and torment husbands, children be pert and insolent to their parents or parents tyrannize over their children, and all Molière's artillery is drawn into fire. Molière is against avarice, against meanness and malice and cruelty, against fanaticism and hardheartedness; and, though he prefers the genially careless spendthrift to the close-fisted, he is against extravagance and frivolity, too, and flippancy and shallowness Everywhere he shows his belief in warmth, kindliness, common sense, depth of feeling, and intelligence.

Now, this superb balance and sanity achieve a simplicity so complete that its depth and breadth take on a deceptive appearance of being commonplace. Audiences may imagine, even while he is rousing them to inextinguishable laughter, that their hilarity has been provoked by a mere flair of comic absurdity or farcical invention in the playwright, that has no connection with the truth. But in reality the truth of Molière's commentary on life is the very core of his comedy. "He has made these light, frivolous, happy things," says Lytton Strachey, "as eternal as the severest and weightiest works of men. He has filled them with a wonderful irresponsible wisdom, condensing into single phrases the ridiculousness of generations."

Molière

Molière's dramatic methods are strikingly like those of Ben Jonson, but he was not the careful craftsman that Jonson was. Some of his greatest plays are almost slapdash in structure; his verse is often little more than doggerel, and its rhyming monotonous. He has none of Jonson's rigorous unity of mood, but sweeps in a single play from the craziest buffoonery to the subtlest wit and most devastating satire. It is in his character drawing that he is like Jonson. His is the method of the simplified type, of selective elimination. Harpagon is miserly and he is old; Tartuffe is power-loving, hypocritical, and lascivious; Alceste blunt, disillusioned with men, and unhappy. That—at first—seems all.

But Molière has more gradations of light and shade than can be found in Jonson's melodramatic glare of contrasts. His types are always essences, never, as Jonson's sometimes are, mere eccentricities Even so slight a sketch as the child, Louison, who appears for a single scene in The Imaginary Invalid*, is more than a stage child. Her father is going to whip her, she pretends to fall down dead; Argan, with his usual gullibility, believes she really has died of terror, and begins to lament. The child leaps up. "Don't cry, Papa," she says; "all of a sudden I'm not dead." How exquisitely that quaint, absurd "all of a sudden" creates the living, lovable, tenderhearted infant before our eyes!*

More than this, although Molière values above all the doctrines of moderation and common sense, he understands those powerful forces in the soul that "brush aside," in Strachey's words, "the feeble dictates of human wisdom like gossamer, and lend, by their very lack of compromise, a dignity and almost a nobility to folly and even vice itself." To the very end Harpagon is more devoted to his casket than to his children: George Dandin enduring from his wife's family the affronts reserved for the upstart, and apostrophizing himself, "Tu l'as voulu, George Dandin," *is at once ludicrous and painful. And Tartuffe has "the kind of horrible greatness Milton's Satan might have" if he lived with a seventeenth-century bourgeois family in France.*

These are the reasons that Molière's comedy-satire is supreme in all the satire of the theater. Two-dimensional though his caricatures are, they suggest immeasurable depths; they are like shadows cast by tremendous beings. For all his prosaic sense, he has a profound sensitiveness. His comprehension of the world is no mere intellectual diagram, but as full of warmth and life as his laughter. His wisdom is a living equilibrium of sympathy and sanity.

THE IMAGINARY INVALID

*** *The Imaginary Invalid* was first produced in 1673. The scenes are Act III, Scenes 3 and 6. The translation is by the editor ***

Béralde Tries to Convince His Brother Argan That Medicine Is a Fraud

The scene is Argan's bedroom

BÉRALDE. This husband Angelique is to take, ought he to be for her, my brother, or for you?

ARGAN. He ought to be, my brother, both for her and for me, I want to have in my family people that I need.

BÉRALDE. By that reasoning, when your little Louison grows up, you'll give her in marriage to an apothecary.

ARGAN. Why not?

BÉRALDE. Is it possible that you're so bewitched with your druggists and doctors, that you positively wish to be ill in spite of people and nature!

ARGAN. How do you make that out, my brother?

BÉRALDE. I mean, my brother, that I don't know any man who is less ill than you are, and that I wouldn't ask for a better constitution than you have. A great sign that you are quite well, and that your body is perfectly sound, is that with all the care you've taken of yourself you haven't been able to spoil the goodness of your constitution, and that you haven't died of all the medicines they've made you take.

ARGAN. But don't you know, my brother, that that is just what saves me; and that Monsieur Purgon says I would die if I let as much as three days go by without taking care of myself?

BÉRALDE. If you don't take care, he'll take such good care of you that he'll send you to the other world.

ARGAN. Let us consider a little, my brother. Have you no faith in medicine?

BÉRALDE. No, my brother; and I don't see that for our health we need to have.

ARGAN. What! you think there's no truth in a thing established all over the world and reverenced for centuries?

BÉRALDE. Far from finding any truth in it, between you and me I find it one of the greatest follies of mankind; and, to look at things philosophically, I know of no stranger mummery, nothing more ridiculous, than a man who wants to meddle with curing another.

ARGAN. And why, my brother, don't you want one man to try to cure another?

BÉRALDE. For this reason, my brother, that the springs of our machinery are mysteries into which, so far, men haven't penetrated an inch; and that nature has hung before our eyes veils too thick for us to see through.

ARGAN. According to you, then, doctors don't know anything?

BÉRALDE. Not at all, my brother. They know most of the greatest classics, they know how to speak a beautiful Latin; know how to name all the maladies in Greek, define them and classify them; but how to cure them, that is something they don't know.

ARGAN. But certainly we must agree that doctors know more about these things than others do.

BÉRALDE. They know, my brother, just what I told you, which won't cure much; and all the excellence of their art consists of pompous balderdash and specious gabble that gives you words instead of reasons and promises instead of performance.

ARGAN. But after all, my brother, there are people as wise and clever as you; and we see that when they're sick everybody has recourse to doctors.

BÉRALDE. That's a sign of human weakness, not of the worth of their art.

ARGAN. But doctors themselves evidently believe in their art, since they employ it on themselves.

BÉRALDE. Some of them share the popular error by which they profit, and others profit by it without sharing it. Your Monsieur Purgon is not a cheat, he's all doctor from head to heels, believes more firmly in his rules than in all the demonstrations of mathematics, and would consider it a crime to wish to examine them. He sees nothing obscure in medicine, nothing doubtful, nothing difficult, he prescribes bleedings and purgings at random with a vehemence of prevention, an inflexibility of confidence, a defiance of reason and common sense, that hesitates at nothing. He doesn't have to wish you any ill in what he does to you; he'll dispatch you with the best faith in the world; and in killing you he'll do only what he's done to his wife and children, and will do, if necessary, to himself.

ARGAN. Oh, you just have a grudge against him, my brother. But let's get down to facts. What should we do when we're ill?

BÉRALDE. Nothing, my brother.

ARGAN. Nothing?

BÉRALDE. Nothing. Only keep still. Nature herself, when we let her, will gently extricate herself from the disorder she has fallen into. It is our anxiety, our impatience, that spoils everything. Most men die of their remedies, not of their illnesses.

ARGAN. But you must agree, my brother, that nature can be helped by certain things.

BÉRALDE. My heavens, brother! those are just notions we like to repeat. Very beautiful fancies have always insinuated themselves among men; we come to believe them because they flatter us and we wish they were true. When a doctor talks to you of aiding, relieving, easing nature, of taking away from it what hurts it and giving it what it lacks, of reëstablishing it and restoring the full ease of its functions, when he talks to you of rectifying the blood, soothing the bowels and the brains, reducing the swelling of the spleen, mending the lungs, repairing the liver, fortifying the heart, restoring and conserving the natural warmth, and having secrets that will lengthen life by years, he's just telling you the fairy-tale of medicine. But when you come down to truth and experience, you find there's nothing in all that, and it's like one of those beautiful dreams which leave you on waking only the disappointment of having believed in them.

ARGAN. That is to say that all the science of the world is locked up in your head, and that you know more about it than all the great doctors of our age.

BÉRALDE. In talk and in deeds your great doctors are two entirely different kinds of people. Hear them talk, and they are the cleverest people in the world; see them act, the most ignorant of men.

ARGAN. Bless me! I see you're a great doctor yourself, and I only wish some of them were here to refute your reasoning and abate your chatter.

BÉRALDE. Brother, I don't take it as my job to combat medicine Everyone, at his peril or fortune, may believe what he pleases. What I say is only between us. I only hoped I could get you out of the error you have fallen into, and, to amuse you, take you to see some of Molière's comedies on this theme.

ARGAN. He's an impudent rascal, your Molière, with his comedies! a nice thing, making game of upright people like doctors!

BÉRALDE. It's not the doctors he makes game of, but the absurdity of medicine.

ARGAN. That's a fine business, butting in on the control of medicine! There's a fine booby, an insolent scoundrel, mocking consultations and prescriptions, attacking the college of physicians, and putting on his stage such venerable persons as that!

BÉRALDE. What do you want him to put there but the different professions of men? Every day they play princes and kings, who are quite as good as your doctors.

ARGAN. By Heaven! if I were the doctors I'd revenge myself for his impertinence. When he was sick, I'd let him die without help. In vain he'd beg and beg, I wouldn't give him the least little bleeding, not the least little enema; and I'd say to him: Die, die, that will teach you to deride the Faculty.

BÉRALDE. You're in a temper with him.

ARGAN. Yes. He's an ill-advised fellow, and if the doctors are wise they'll do what I say.

BÉRALDE. He will be even wiser than your doctors, for he won't even ask their help.

ARGAN. So much the worse for him, if he has recourse to no remedies.

BÉRALDE. He has his reasons for not wanting any, and he maintains they are permissible only to very robust and vigorous people who have strength enough to bear the sickness and the remedy as well; but as for him, he has only strength enough to bear his illness.

Monsieur Purgon Casts a Rebellious Patient into the Outer Darkness

The scene is still Argan's bedchamber
To Argan and Béralde enter M. Purgon, shown in by Toinette

M. PURGON. Downstairs at the door I've just learned some pretty news, that they mock my prescriptions here, and refuse to take the remedy I have prescribed.

ARGAN. Monsieur, it's not—

M. PURGON. This is a great audacity, a strange rebellion of a patient against his doctor!

TOINETTE. It's appalling.

M. PURGON. An enema that I took pleasure in compounding myself.

ARGAN. It wasn't I—

M. PURGON. Invented and formed according to all the rules of the art.

TOINETTE. He is in the wrong.

M. PURGON. And which would have had a marvelous effect on the bowels.

ARGAN. My brother?

M. PURGON. Send him away with scorn!

ARGAN (*pointing to Béralde*). It is he—

M. PURGON. It is an unheard-of thing to do.

TOINETTE. That is true.

M. PURGON. An outrageous assault upon medicine.

ARGAN (*indicating Béralde*). He is the cause—

M. PURGON. A crime of lèse-faculty, which cannot be severely enough punished.

TOINETTE. You are right.

M. PURGON. I hereby declare that I break off relations with you.

ARGAN. It is my brother—

M. PURGON. That I will have no more to do with you.

TOINETTE. You will do well.

M. PURGON. And that, to end all connection with you, here is the deed of gift I was making my nephew in consideration of the marriage. (*He tears up the deed, and furiously throws down the pieces.*)

ARGAN. It is my brother who did all the wrong.

M. PURGON. Despise my enema!

ARGAN. Have it brought to me; I'm going to take it.

M. PURGON. Before long I should have had you completely cured.

TOINETTE. He doesn't deserve it.

M. PURGON. I was going to purify your body, and rid it entirely of dangerous humours.

ARGAN. Ah! my brother!

M. PURGON. And I needed no more than a dozen further medicines to empty the bottom of the sack.

TOINETTE. He is unworthy of your pains.

M. PURGON. But, since you have not chosen to be cured by my hands . . .

ARGAN. It isn't my fault.

M. PURGON. Since you have exempted yourself from the obedience one owes one's physician . . .

TOINETTE. That cries for vengeance.

M. PURGON. Since you have rebelled against the remedies I prescribed . . .

ARGAN. Hey! not at all.

M. PURGON. I have to say to you that I abandon you to your bad constitution, to the intemperance of your bowels, to the corruption of your blood, to the acidity of your bile, and to the impurity of your humours.

TOINETTE. It is well done.

ARGAN. Ah, God!

M. PURGON. And I predict that within four days, you will fall into a state that is incurable;

ARGAN. Ah, mercy!

M. PURGON. That you will fall into a condition of bradypepsia,*

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. From bradypepsia into dyspepsia,

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. From dyspepsia into apepsia,

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. From apepsia into lientery,

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. From lientery into dysentery,

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. From dysentery into dropsy,

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon!

M. PURGON. And from dropsy into deprivation of life, to which you will have brought yourself by your folly. *M. Purgon stalks out*

ARGAN. Ah! My God! I am dead. Brother, you have destroyed me.

* *Bradypepsia*: slow and imperfect digestion; *lientery*: a looseness in which the bowels void nourishment almost as soon as they receive it.

THE MISER

*** *The Miser* was first produced in 1667. The scenes are Act I, Scenes 6, 7, and 8, and Act V, Scene 3. The translation is by the editor ***

Harpagon Decides on a Husband for His Daughter

The scene is Harpagon's house
Harpagon and his daughter Elise discovered

HARPAGON. I intend your brother for a certain widow, of whom they were just speaking to me this morning, and you, I will give to M. Anselme.

ELISE. To M. Anselme?

HARPAGON. Yes, a staid, prudent, and careful man, who is not above fifty, and whose wealth is spoken of everywhere.

ELISE (*making a curtsey*). I have no wish to get married, father, if you please.

HARPAGON (*imitating her*). And I, my dear girl, my pet, I wish you to get married, if you please.

ELISE (*curtseying once more*). I beg your pardon, father.

HARPAGON (*imitating Elise*). I beg your pardon, daughter.

ELISE. I am M. Anselme's most humble servant (*curtseying again*); but, with your leave, I shall not marry him.

HARPAGON. I am your most humble slave, but (*imitating Elise*), with your leave, you shall marry him not later than this evening.

ELISE. Not later than this evening?

HARPAGON. Not later than this evening.

ELISE (*curtseying again*). That shall not be, father.

HARPAGON (*imitating her again*). This shall be, daughter.

ELISE. No.

HARPAGON. Yes.

ELISE. No, I tell you.

HARPAGON. Yes, I tell you.

ELISE. That is a thing you shall not drive me to.

HARPAGON. That is a thing I shall drive you to.

ELISE. I will kill myself sooner than marry such a husband.

HARPAGON. You shall not kill yourself, and you shall marry him. But has such boldness ever been seen! Has ever a daughter been heard to speak to her father in this manner?

ELISE. But has any one ever seen a father give away his daughter in marriage in this manner?

HARPAGON. It is a match to which no one can object, and I bet that every one will approve of my choice.

ELISE. And I bet that no reasonable being will approve of it.

HARPAGON (*perceiving Valère in the distance*). Here comes Valère. Shall we make him judge between us in this matter?

ELISE. I agree to it.

HARPAGON. Will you submit to his judgment?

ELISE. Yes; I will submit to what he shall decide.

HARPAGON. That is agreed.

HARPAGON. Come here, Valère. We have elected you to tell us who is in the right, my daughter or I.

VALÈRE. You, Sir, beyond contradiction.

HARPAGON. Do you know what we are talking about?

VALÈRE. No. But you could not be in the wrong. You are made up of right.

HARPAGON. I intend, this evening, to give her for a husband a man who is as rich as he is discreet; and the jade tells me to my face that she will not take him. What say you to this?

VALÈRE. What do I say to it?

HARPAGON. Yes.

VALÈRE. Eh! eh!

HARPAGON. What?

VALÈRE. I say, that in the main, I am of your opinion; and you cannot but be right. But on the other side, she is not altogether wrong, and . . .

HARPAGON. How is that? M. Anselme is a desirable match; he is a gentleman who is noble, kind, steady, discreet, and very well to do, and who has neither chick nor child left him from his first marriage. Could she meet with a better match?

VALÈRE. That is true. But she might say to you that it is hurrying things a little too much, and that you should give her some time at least to see whether her inclinations would agree with . . .

HARPAGON. This is an opportunity which should be taken by the forelock. I find in this marriage an advantage which I could not find elsewhere; and he agrees to take her without a dowry.

VALÈRE. Without a dowry?

HARPAGON. Yes.

VALÈRE. In that case, I say no more. Do you see, this is altogether a convincing reason; one must yield to that.

HARPAGON. It is a considerable saving to me.

VALÈRE. Assuredly; it cannot be gainsaid. It is true that your daughter might represent to you that marriage is a more important matter than you think,

that it involves a question of being happy or miserable all one's life, and that an engagement which must last till death ought never to be entered into except with great precautions.

HARPAGON. Without a dowry!

VALÈRE. You are right. That decides it all, of course. There are people who might tell you that on such an occasion the wishes of a daughter are something, no doubt, that ought to be taken into consideration, and that this great disparity of age, of temper, and of feelings makes a marriage subject to very sad accidents.

HARPAGON. Without a dowry!

VALÈRE. Ah! there is no reply to that; I know that well enough. Who the devil could say anything against that? Not that there are not many fathers who would prefer humouring the wishes of their daughters to the money they could give them; who would not sacrifice them to their own interests, and who would, above all things, try to infuse into marriage that sweet conformity, which, at all times, maintains honour, peace, and joy, and which . . .

HARPAGON. Without a dowry!

VALÈRE. It is true; that closes one's mouth at once. Without a dowry! There are no means of resisting an argument like that.

HARPAGON (*aside, looking towards the garden*). Bless my soul! I think I hear a dog barking. Most likely it is some one with a design upon my money. (*To Valère*) Do not stir; I am coming back directly.

ELISE. Are you jesting, Valère, to speak to him in that manner?

VALÈRE. It is in order not to sour his temper, and to gain my end the better. To run counter to his opinions is the way to spoil everything, and there are certain minds which cannot be dealt with in a straightforward manner; temperaments averse to all resistance; restive characters, whom the truth causes to rear, who always set their faces against the straight road of reason, and whom you cannot lead except by turning them with their back towards the goal. Pretend to consent to what he wishes, you will gain your end all the better; and . . .

ELISE. But this marriage, Valère!

VALÈRE. We will find some pretext to break it off.

ELISE. But what to invent, if it is to be consummated this evening?

VALÈRE. You must ask for a delay, and pretend to be ill.

ELISE. But the trick will be discovered, if they call in the doctors.

VALÈRE. Are you joking? What do they know about it? Come, come, with them you may have whatever illness you please; they will find you reasons to tell you whence it proceeds.

Harpagon and Valère Talk at Cross Purposes

[*Harpagon believes Valère has stolen a casket of valuables from him, and has summoned a Magistrate to indict him for the theft. Valère has in fact eloped with Elise, Harpagon's daughter. Valère appears as Harpagon and his coachman Master Jacques are conferring with the Magistrate.*]

HARPAGON. Come near, and confess to the blackest deed, the most horrible crime that ever was committed.

VALÈRE. What do you wish, Sir?

HARPAGON. How, wretch! you do not blush for your crime.

VALÈRE. Of what crime are you talking?

HARPAGON. Of what crime am I talking, infamous monster! as if you did not know what I mean! It is in vain that you attempt to disguise it; the thing has been discovered, and I have just learned all. How could you thus abuse my kindness, and introduce yourself into my house expressly to betray me, to play me a trick of that sort?

VALÈRE. Since everything has been revealed to you, Sir, I will not prevaricate, and deny the matter to you.

JACQUES (*aside*). Oh! Oh! could I unconsciously have guessed aright!

VALÈRE. It was my intention to speak to you about it, and I wished to wait for a favourable opportunity; but, since matters are so, I implore you not to be angry, and to be willing to listen to my motives.

HARPAGON. And what pretty motives can you advance, infamous thief?

VALÈRE. Ah! Sir, I have not deserved these names. It is true that I have committed an offence against you, but after all, the fault is pardonable.

HARPAGON. How! pardonable? A trap, a murder like that.

VALÈRE. For pity's sake, do not get angry. When you have heard me, you will see that the harm is not so great as you make it.

HARPAGON. The harm is not so great as I make it! What! my blood, my very heart, hang-dog!

VALÈRE. Your blood, Sir, has not fallen into bad hands. I am of a rank not to do it any injury; and there is nothing in all this but what I can easily repair.

HARPAGON. That is what I intend, and that you should restore to me what you have robbed me of.

VALÈRE. Your honour shall be amply satisfied, Sir.

HARPAGON. There is no question of honour in it. But tell me, who has driven you to such a deed?

VALÈRE. Alas! need you ask me?

HARPAGON. Yes, indeed, I do ask you.

VALÈRE. A god who carries his excuse for all he makes people do Love.

HARPAGON. Love?

VALÈRE. Yes.

HARPAGON. A pretty love, a pretty love, upon my word' the love for my gold pieces!

VALÈRE. No, Sir, it is not your wealth that has tempted me, it is not that which has dazzled me; and I protest that I have not the slightest design upon your property, provided you leave me that which I have got.

HARPAGON. No, by all the devils I shall not leave it to you. But see what insolence to wish to keep that of which he has robbed me!

VALÈRE. Do you call that robbery?

HARPAGON. Do I call it robbery? a treasure like that'

VALÈRE. It is a treasure, that is true, and the most precious you have, no doubt; but it would not be losing it to leave it to me. I ask you for it on my knees, this treasure full of charms, and to do right, you should grant it to me.

HARPAGON. I shall do nothing of the kind. What does this all mean?

VALÈRE. We have pledged our faith to each other, and have sworn never to part.

HARPAGON. The oath is admirable, and the promise rather funny.

VALÈRE. Yes, we have bound ourselves to be all in all to each other for ever.

HARPAGON. I shall hinder you from it, I assure you.

VALÈRE. Nothing but death shall separate us.

HARPAGON. It is being devilishly enamoured of my money.

VALÈRE. I have told you already, Sir, that interest did not urge me to do what I have done. My heart did not act from the motives which you imagine, a nobler one inspired me with this resolution.

HARPAGON. You shall see that it is from Christian charity that he covets my property! But I shall look to that, and the law will give me satisfaction for all this, you bare-faced rogue.

VALÈRE. You shall act as you like, and I am ready to bear all the violence you please; but I implore you to believe, at least, that if harm has been done, I only am to be blamed, and that in all this, your daughter is in nowise culpable.

HARPAGON. Indeed, I believe you! it would be very strange if my daughter had had a part in this crime. But I will have my property back again, and I will have you confess where you have carried it away to.

VALÈRE. I? I have not carried it away at all It is still in your house.

HARPAGON (*aside*). O! my beloved cash-box! (*Aloud*) Then it has not gone out of my house?

VALÈRE. No, sir.

HARPAGON. Just tell me that you have not made free with it?

VALÈRE. I make free with it! Ah! you wrong us both; and it is with a wholly pure and respectable ardour that I burn.

HARPAGON (*aside*). Burn for my cash-box!

VALÈRE. I would sooner die than display a single offensive thought to one too prudent and honourable for that.

HARPAGON (*aside*). My cash-box too honourable!

VALÈRE. All my wishes are confined to the joy of gazing; and nothing criminal has profaned the passion with which her beautiful eyes have inspired me.

HARPAGON (*aside*). The beautiful eyes of my cash-box! He speaks as a lover speaks of his mistress.

VALÈRE. Mistress Claude, Sir, knows the truth of this affair; and she can testify to it.

HARPAGON. What! my servant is an accomplice in the matter?

VALÈRE. Yes, Sir; she was a witness to our engagement; and it is after having known the honourable intent of my passion, that she has assisted me in persuading your daughter to plight her troth, and receive mine.

HARPAGON (*aside*). Eh? Does the fear of justice make him rave? (*To Valère*) What means all this gibberish about my daughter?

VALÈRE. I say, Sir, that I have had all the trouble in the world to bring her modesty to consent to what my love wished for.

HARPAGON. The modesty of whom?

VALÈRE. Of your daughter; and it is only yesterday that she could make up her mind to sign a mutual promise of marriage.

HARPAGON. My daughter has signed you a promise of marriage?

VALÈRE. Yes, Sir, as I have signed her one.

HARPAGON. O Heaven! another disgrace!

JACQUES (*to the Magistrate*). Write, Sir, write.

HARPAGON More harm! additional despair! (*To the Magistrate*) Come, Sir, do the duty of your office, and draw up for him his indictment as a felon and a suborner.

LOW-BURLESQUE PARODY OF PURITANISM



THE SATIRE *of Don Quixote twisted itself in Cervantes' hands, almost in his own despite, and turned inside out, fooling us by making the critique of chivalry more than half defense. Cracked though the knight is, like his pasteboard helmet, his high impossible demands are seen at last as touchstones of truth even in Sancho's world of greedy gullet and snatching fear. The burlesque ridicule of nobility and goodness only pretends to regard them as silly and insane.*

Butler's Hudibras *parodies Cervantes in his machinery of knight and squire setting out to do deeds of errantry, but reverses the direction of the satire by pretending to regard their hypocritical fanaticism as praiseworthy. Hudibras, the bluenose Presbyterian Knight, and Ralpho, his canting Independent Squire, in all their meanness, shabby mediocrity, intolerance, and intellectual dishonesty, are everywhere in the poem treated with a transparent mock-dignity and their cheap doings handled as heroic Butler's scornful humor shows Hudibras falling out of his saddle and landing on a terrified bear, putting a fiddler in stocks, being mauled by the shrew Trulla; magnifying these grotesque episodes into glorious victories and Homeric defeats.*

Hudibras *is a product of the Civil War between King and Parliament. James I's doctrine of divine right had borne its fruits his more determined son had tried to rule by prerogative; the royal obstinacy united landed*

gentry, small burghers, merchants, and Puritans against him, and brought Laud and Strafford to the scaffold; in the struggle that followed Charles's own head fell from his obstinate neck. During the Roundhead interlude Butler was secretary to Sir Samuel Luke, a Puritan country squire, and had to hold his Cavalier sympathies in abeyance. But he stored up his contempt, and added other aversions to it. When the first two parts appeared, a few years after the Restoration, they were not merely a glorified attack on Presbytery, but, as George Kitchin remarks, on "all the follies of the day—superstition, pedantry, corrupt sophistication, love nonsense, religious bigotry." The reaction under Charles II made the poem a riotous success.

Its popularity was deserved. Butler's strange reservoirs of learning, his fantastic wit, his annihilating sarcasm, his mastery of the mock-heroic, his grotesque figures of speech, his brilliant exploitation of limping and ridiculous rhyme, all combine to make his doggerel a triumph of burlesque castigation. Even those who have not read the poem know some of his comic similes:

. . . Like a lobster boiled, the morn
From black to red began to turn.

His wit can be lethal:

For breaking of an oath and lying
Is but a kind of self-denying,
A saint-like virtue, and from hence
Some have broke oaths by Providence.

It can also be ludicrous:

So Spanish heroes with their lances
At once wound bulls and ladies' fancies;
And he acquires the noblest spouse
That widows greatest herds of cows.

But Butler had one more weapon, the talent to turn words themselves into clowns, pulling long noses and leaping in ridiculous acrobatics. Who but Butler, or Ogden Nash, would have thought to rhyme "sisters" and "whiskers"? or "difficile" and "whistle," "unriddle," "needle," "naval," "malleible"? Sometimes these grave and farfetched distortions carry a depth-charge of criticism by their very association, as in "conscience," "nonsense," and "philosopher," "gloss over." And when he wants to, he

can make even a correct rhyme comic. "Mameluke," "Samuel Luke," "Trojans," "astrologians," "liquors," "vicars," "doctrines orthodox," "apostolic blows and knocks" His poem is a powder magazine of exploding wit. Doubtless it left the Puritanism of an Oliver Cromwell or a Colonel John Hutchinson untouched. But the Puritanism of Tribulation Wholesome and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy and the moral Pecksniff it blew into bits.

HUDIBRAS

*** Part I of *Hudibras* appeared in 1663, Part II in 1664, Part III in 1678. The two selections given here are from the opening of Part I ***

Hudibras and the Presbyterians

When civil dudgeon first grew high,
And men fell out they knew not why;
When hard words, jealousies, and fears
Set folks together by the ears,
And made them fight, like mad or drunk,
For Dame Religion, as for punk,
Whose honesty they all durst swear for,
Though not a man of them knew wherefore;
When gospel-trumpeter, surrounded
With long-eared rout, to battle sounded;
And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Was beat with fist, instead of a stick:
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a colonelling.
A wight he was whose very sight would
Entitle him, Mirror of Knighthood,
That never bowed his stubborn knee
To anything but chivalry;
Nor put up blow, but that which laid
Right Worshipful on shoulder-blade:
Chief of domestic knights and errant,
Either for chartel or for warrant:
Great on the bench, great in the saddle,
That could as well bind o'er as swaddle:
Mighty was he at both of these,
And styled of war as well as peace.
(So some rats, of amphibious nature,
Are either for the land or water.)
But here our authors make a doubt
Whether he were more wise or stout.
Some hold the one, and some the other;

But, howsoe'er they make a pother,
The difference was so small, his brain
Outweighed his rage but half a grain;
Which made some take him for a tool
That knaves do work with, called a Fool.
For't has been held by many, that
As Montaigne, playing with his cat,
Complains she thought him but an ass,
Much more she would Sir HUDIBRAS,
(For that's the name our valiant Knight
To all his challenges did write).
But they're mistaken very much,
'Tis plain enough he was not such.
We grant, although he had much wit,
H' was very shy of using it;
As being loth to wear it out,
And therefore bore it not about,
Unless on holidays or so,
As men their best apparel do.
Besides, 'tis known he could speak Greek
As naturally as pigs squeak;
That Latin was no more difficile,
Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle;
Being rich in both, he never scanted
His bounty unto such as wanted,
But much of either would afford
To many, that had not one word.
For Hebrew roots, although they're found
To flourish most in barren ground,
He has such plenty as sufficed
To make some think him circumcised:
And truly so he was, perhaps,
Not as a proselyte, but for claps.
  He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic:
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute:
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;

He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl,
A calf an alderman, a goose a justice,
And rooks committee-men and trustees.
He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination.
All this by syllogism, true
In mood and figure, he would do.

Beside he was a shrewd philosopher,
And had read every text and gloss over;
Whate'er the crabbed'st author hath,
He understood b' implicit faith;
Whatever skeptic could enquire for,
For every why he had a wherefore;
Knew more than forty of them do
As far as words and terms could go.
All which he understood by rote,
And, as occasion served, would quote;
No matter whether right or wrong,
They might be either said or sung.
His notions fitted things so well,
That which was which he could not tell,
But oftentimes mistook the one
For th'other, as great clerks have done.
He could reduce all things to acts,
And knew their natures by abstracts;
Where entity and quiddity,
The ghosts of defunct bodies, fly;
Where truth in person does appear,
Like words congealed in northern air.
He knew what's what, and that's as high
As metaphysic wit can fly.
In school-divinity as able
As he that hight *Irrefragable*;*
A second Thomas, or at once
To name them all, another Dunce:
Profound in all the nominal
And real ways beyond them all;

* Alexander Hales, a medieval theologian, was called Doctor Irrefragabilis, the Invincible Doctor, for the power of his arguments.

For he a rope of sand could twist
As tough as learned Sorbonnist;
And weave fine cobwebs, fit for skull
That's empty when the moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That's to be let unfurnishèd.
He could raise scruples dark and nice
And after solve 'em in a trice,
As if divinity had catched
The itch, on purpose to be scratched;
Or, like a mountebank, did wound
And stab herself with doubts profound,
Only to show with how small pain
The sores of faith are cured again;
Although by woeful proof we find
They always leave a scar behind.
He knew the seat of paradise,
Could tell in what degree it lies;
And, as he was disposed, could prove it
Below the moon, or else above it.
What Adam dreamt of, when his bride
Came from her closet in his side;
Whither the devil tempted her
By a High Dutch interpreter;
If either of them had a navel,
Who first made music malleable;
Whether the serpent, at the fall,
Had cloven feet, or none at all.
All this, without a gloss or comment,
He could unriddle in a moment,
In proper terms, such as men smatter
When they throw out and miss the matter.
For his religion, it was fit
To match his learning and his wit:
'Twas Presbyterian true blue,
For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true church militant,
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun,
Decide all controversies by

Infallible artillery;
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire and sword and desolation,
A godly thorough reformation,
Which always must be carried on,
And still be doing, never done;
As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.
A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd perverse antipathies;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding something still amiss:
More peevish, cross, and splenetic,
Than dog distract, or monkey sick.
That with more care keep holiday
The wrong, than others the right way:
Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to.
Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipped God for spite.
The self-same thing they will abhor
One way, and long another for.
Free-will they one way disavow,
Another, nothing else allow:
All piety consists therein
In them, in other men all sin.

Hudibras' Weapons and Charger

His doublet was of sturdy buff,
And though not sword—yet cudgel-proof;
Whereby 'twas fitter for his use,
Who feared no blows but such as bruise.
His breeches were of rugged woollen,
And had been at the siege of Boulogne;
To old King Harry so well known,
Some writers held they were his own.
Through they were lined with many a piece
Of ammunition, bread and cheese,

And fat black-puddings, proper food
For warriors that delight in blood:
For, as we said, he always chose
To carry victual in his hose,
That often tempted rats and mice
The ammunition to surprise:
And when he put a hand but in
The one or t'other magazine,
They stoutly in defense on't stood,
And from the wounded foe drew blood;
And till th'were stormed and beaten out,
Ne'er left the fortified redoubt.

His puissant sword unto his side,
Near his undaunted heart, was tied;
With basket-hilt, that would hold broth,
And serve for fight and dinner both:
In it he melted lead for bullets,
To shoot at foes, and sometimes pullets;
To whom he bore so fell a grutch,
He ne'er gave quarter t' any such.
The trenchant blade, Toledo trusty,
For want of fighting was grown rusty.
And ate into itself, for lack
Of somebody to hew and hack.
The peaceful scabbard where it dwelt
The rancour of its edge had felt;
For of the lower end two handful
It had devourèd, 'twas so manful,
And so much scorned to lurk in case,
As if it durst not show its face.

Thus clad and fortified, Sir Knight,
From peaceful home, set forth to fight.
But first with nimble active force,
He got on the out-side of his horse;
But having but one stirrup tied
T' his saddle, on the further side,
It was so short, h' had much ado
To reach it with his desperate toe:
But, after many strains and heaves,

He got up to the saddle-eaves,
From whence he vaulted into th' seat,
With so much vigor, strength, and heat,
That he had almost tumbled over
With his own weight, but did recover,
By laying hold on tail and mane,
Which oft he used instead of rein.
 But, now we talk of mounting steed,
Before we further do proceed,
It doth behove us to say something
Of that which bore our valiant bumkin.
The beast was sturdy, large, and tall,
With mouth of meal, and eyes of wall;
I would say eye, for h' had but one,
As most agree, though some say none.
He was well stayed, and in his gait
Preserved a grave, majestic state.
At spur or switch no more he skipped,
Or mended pace, when Spaniard whipped:
And yet so fiery, he would bound,
As if he grieved to touch the ground;
That Caesar's horse, who, as fame goes,
Had corns upon his feet and toes,
Was not by half so tender hoofed,
Nor trod upon the ground so soft.
And as that beast would kneel and stoop
(Some write) to take his rider up;
So Hudibras his ('tis well known)
Would often do to set him down.

LA FONTAINE: THE FABLE AS SOPHISTICATED SATIRE



AT FIRST glance, La Fontaine seems strangely out of place in the formal avenues of seventeenth-century French classicism. Amid the thunderous harmonies of Bossuet, the bitter lightning flashes of La Rochefoucauld, the stately march of the tragic Alexandrine, and the annihilating common sense of the town-bred Molière, La Fontaine is like some corduroy-trousered peasant wandering among the green alleys and gleaming marbles of Versailles. In an age whose literary vocabulary was narrowly and elegantly selective, La Fontaine's language abounds in old-fashioned words and racy colloquialisms steeped in country soil. In an age when the caesura made its measured pause in the majestic periods of the hexameter line, La Fontaine is endlessly varied in form and rhythm. These tales, so countrified and naïve on the surface, of Grippeminaud the cat, and Messer Gaster the stomach, with La Fontaine himself as Gros-Jean, seem less appropriate to the court of the Roi Soleil than to some Breton fireside where a clay-stained farmer takes his grandchildren on his knee.

And indeed there is a sense in which La Fontaine is what he seems. But if he is a peasant, he has the peasant's trick of hiding his shrewdness be-

neath a mask of simplicity. The face ingenuous, almost vacuous, he makes his little joke, with a childlike innocence drops his little innuendo, and beneath the curtain of drawn-down shaggy brows he watches you slyly, the eyes gleaming and delighted with intelligence. In reality La Fontaine is exquisitely sophisticated, and his country manner simply a last refinement of urbanity, as when a man of rustic origins, who has known the world, retires to his farm again, resumes the unpretentious speech of his fathers, and stretches his legs in front of the fire with a glass of wine at his elbow. He looks on the world as the countryman looks on nature, neither romantically nor with angry rebellion, seeing the toil and the cruelty, and, with his deeper poet's insight, feeling the richness and the beauty as well. The mingling of the two his unsentimental classical good sense accepts with a smile and a shrug.

But La Fontaine learned more than his philosophy from his age. Different as he is superficially from his more dignified contemporaries, he shares their literary merits. The structure of his fables is like a tiny but perfect piece of carving. There is never a word too much; every phrase has its function. The poems are crowded with brilliant little vignettes that bring vividly before you the very flash of the crane's neck as he gobbles a frog, the very whisk of the mouse's tail. The country words, remote as they are from the refinements of Racine, are chiseled, like his, to express with the utmost concentration exactly what their author means The flexible and responsive line here lengthens itself to incorporate a colorful detail, and there shortens itself to epigrammatic force; the rhyme delicately underlines a stroke of comedy or a flicker of insinuation. With their playful fancy and their sly irony, these pictures of the world and human nature are miniature masterpieces.

THE FABLES

*** The first collection of *The Fables*, from which these selections are made, appeared in 1668. The translations are by Elizur Wright, Jr. ***

The Fox Hoaxes the Raven Out of His Cheese

PERCHED on a lofty oak,
Sir Raven held a lunch of cheese;
Sir Fox, who smelled it in the breeze,
Thus to the holder spoke:
"Ha! how do you do, Sir Raven?
Well, your coat, sir, is a brave one!
So black and glossy, on my word, sir,
With voice to match, you were a bird, sir,
Well fit to be the Phoenix of these days."
Sir Raven, overset with praise,
Must show how musical his croak.
Down fell the luncheon from the oak;
Which snatching up, Sir Fox thus spoke:
"The flatterer, good sir,
Lives on his listener,
Which lesson, if you please,
Is doubtless worth the cheese."
A bit too late, Sir Raven swore
The rogue should never cheat him more.

Each Satisfied with Himself, the Animals Criticize Each Other to Jupiter

From heaven one day did Jupiter proclaim,
"Let all that live before my throne appear,
And there, if anyone hath aught to blame
In matter, form, or texture of his frame,
He may bring forth his grievance without fear.
Redress shall instantly be given each.
Come, monkey, now, first let us have your speech.

You see these quadrupeds, your brothers:
Comparing, then, yourself with others,
Are you well satisfied?" "And wherefore not?"
Says Jock. "Haven't I four trotters with the rest?
Is not my visage comely as the best?
But this my brother Bruin is a blot
On thy creation fair;
And sooner than be painted I'd be shot,
Were I, great Sir, a bear."
The bear approaching, doth he make complaint?
Not he; he lauds himself without restraint.
The elephant he needs must criticize:
To crop his ears and stretch his tail were wise;
A creature he of huge, misshapen size.
The elephant, though famed as beast judicious,
Though on his own account he had no wishes,
Proclaimed dame whale too big to suit his taste;
Of flesh and fat she was a perfect waste.
The little ant, again, pronounced the gnat too wee;
To such a speck, a vast colossus she.
Each censured by the rest, himself content,
Back to their homes all living things were sent.
Such folly liveth yet with human fools.
For others lynxes, for ourselves but moles.
Great blemishes in other men we spy,
Which in ourselves we pass most kindly by.
As in this world we're but wayfarers,
Kind Heaven has made us wallet-bearers.
The pouch behind our own defects must store:
The faults of others lodge in that before.

The Wise Cock Fools the Fox

Upon a tree there mounted guard
A veteran cock, adroit and cunning;
When to the roots a fox, up running,
Spoke thus, in tones of kind regard:
"Our quarrel, brother, 's at an end;
Henceforth I *hope to live your friend:*
For peace now reigns
Throughout the animal domains.

I bear the news: come down, I pray,
And give me the embrace fraternal;
And, please, my brother, don't delay.
So much the tidings do concern all,
That I must spread them far today.
Now you and yours can take your walks
Without a fear or thought of hawks.
And should you clash with them or others,
In us you'll find the best of brothers,—
For which you may, this joyful night,
Your merry bonfires light.
But, first, let's seal the bliss
With one fraternal kiss."
"Good friend," replied the cock, "upon my word,
A better thing I never heard;
And doubly I rejoice
To hear it from your voice;
And really there must be something in it,
For yonder come two greyhounds, which I flatter
Myself are couriers on this very matter.
They come so fast, they'll be here in a minute.
I'll down, and all of us will seal the blessing
With general kissing and caressing."
"Adieu!" said the fox; "my errand's pressing;
I'll hurry on my way,
And we'll rejoice some other day."
So off the fellow scampered, quick and light,
To gain the fox-holes of a neighboring height,
Less happy in his stratagem than flight.
The cock laughed sweetly in his sleeve:
'Tis doubly sweet deceiver to deceive.

Dissatisfied with a Log for King, the Frogs Get a Crane

A certain commonwealth aquatic,
Grown tired of order democratic,
By clamoring in the ears of Jove, effected
Its being to a monarch's power subjected.

Jove flung it down, at first a king pacific,
Who nathless fell with such a splash terrific,
The marshy folks, a foolish race and timid,
Made breathless haste to get from him hid.
They dived into the mud beneath the water,
Or found among the reeds and rushes quarter.
And long it was they dared not see
The dreadful face of majesty,
Supposing that some monstrous frog
Had been sent down to rule the bog.
The king was really a log,
Whose gravity inspired with awe
The first that from his hiding-place
Forth venturing, astonished, saw
The royal blockhead's face.
With trembling and with fear,
At last he drew quite near.
Another followed, and another yet,
Till quite a crowd at last were met;
Who, growing fast and strangely bolder,
Perched soon upon the royal shoulder,
His gracious majesty kept still,
And let his people work their will.
Clack, clack! what din beset the ears of Jove?
"We want a king," the people said, "to move!"
The god straight sent them down a crane
Who caught and slew them without measure,
And gulped their carcasses at pleasure.
Whereat the frogs more woefully complain.
"What! what!" great Jupiter replied;
"By your desires must I be tied?
Think you such government is bad?
You should have kept what first you had;
Which having blindly failed to do,
It had been prudent still for you
To let that former king suffice,
More meek and mild, if not so wise.
With this now make yourselves content,
Lest for your sins a worse be sent."

WYCHERLEY AND RESTORATION COMEDY



THE THEATER in Restoration England epitomizes the spirit of its age. Charles II returned to the throne through a coalition between the court and the merchants and country squires. The aristocracy would do the ruling, but it was to rule in the interests of the mercantile and rural middle class. Puritanism was under a cloud A wave of licentiousness swept over the world of rank and fashion. On the stage, the witty rake, the Bible-ranting fanatic and bigot, the ludicrous ledger-clutching tradesman, the lady of fashion, and the cuckold grew into stock figures Returned Cavaliers who had felt the north wind in France jingled gold crowns in their pockets again; and made them spin in tavern, gambling house, theater, and ball. The solid middle class disapproved, but as long as it prospered in its counting houses it ignored the vices of the Merry Monarch and his court.

And the rest of England, in 1660, was tired of conscience and the nasal twang of psalms. The reopening of the theaters was a part of the desire for fun, music, Maypoles, luxury, and laughter. Closed by the Puritans in 1642, the theater now began to enjoy its revenge. It gave birth to a brilliant new style in the comedy of manners, a social satire that mingles sparkling

wit with the most daring indecency. The reopening also marked the first appearance of women on the English stage; Pepys's Diary *is breathless with the excitement of seeing an actress in men's clothes, "and the best legs I ever saw." The themes and handling of Restoration comedy are strongly influenced by French classicism, but there are characteristic English differences. The sharp unity of a French comic plot becomes garnished with a subplot, sometimes with a little flotilla of subplots; the iridescent scene effervesces with a froth of witty but superfluous characters; an elaboration of hilarious invention distends five acts to bursting. What might have done Molière for an entire comedy, Wycherley and Congreve will pour into a single act, and then with spendthrift lavishness throw four times more into the rest of the play. Such inordinate profusion makes Restoration comedy a shower of jewels, but often leaves it confused and shapeless, "one glaring chaos and wild heap of wit."*

Wycherley's Plain-Dealer *has strong resemblances to Molière's* Misanthrope, *and his* Country Wife *to both* The School for Husbands *and* The School for Wives. *Manly is far wittier and more belligerent than Alceste in his railing, but he does not impress us as deeply as Alceste. Molière's character is too tragically sincere to try to be either rude or clever. We do not doubt that Manly means what he says, but we do not feel that it comes so sadly from a dark melancholy in the heart or that the world is for him the remorseless enemy it is for Alceste.* The Country Wife *is bawdily and outrageously funny, but Pinchwife is mean and nasty-minded where Arnolphe is only mistaken. Horner and his lewd stratagem, the foppish crew of gallants sniffing after all the women, the hot and sniggering pack of wives, provide no contrast of decency and common sense, as Ariste and Chrysalde do in Molière. Marjorie Pinchwife is ignorant, not innocent; when Ruth Gordon acted the role in 1935 she brought out its strange, artificial, and corrupt naïveté.*

But vicious as is the world that Wycherley portrays, we do not feel that Wycherley is himself vicious. "Manly Wycherley" his contemporaries called him; and the epithet recognizes something sane, scornful, and robust in the man, like his own Plain-Dealer. He does not grow indignant, with Juvenal and Swift, and denounce. If there is no decency in these Harcourts, Dorilants, Mrs. Dainty Fidgets, Horners, and Pinchwifes, there is in the clear uncolored contempt with which Wycherley reveals them. Needless to speak a word of condemnation; let them be themselves and show themselves to be.

THE COUNTRY WIFE

*** *The Country Wife* was first performed in 1672. The scenes given here are from Act III, Scenes 1 and 2, and from Act IV, Scene 2 ***

Pinchwife Finds How Hard It Is to Hold Down Even a Country-Bred Wife

The scene is a room in Pinchwife's house
Enter his sister Alithea and Mrs. Pinchwife

ALITHEA. Sister, what ails you? you are grown melancholy.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Would it not make any one melancholy to see you go every day fluttering about abroad, whilst I must stay at home like a poor lonely sullen bird in a cage?

ALITHEA. Ay, sister; but you came young, and just from the nest to your cage: so that I thought you liked it, and could be as cheerful in't as others that took their flight themselves early, and are hopping abroad in the open air.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, I confess I was quiet enough till my husband told me what pure lives the London ladies live abroad, with their dancing, meetings, and junketings, and dressed every day in their best gowns; and I warrant you, play at nine-pins every day of the week, so they do.

Enter Pinchwife

PINCHWIFE. Come, what's here to do? you are putting the town-pleasures in her head, and setting her a-longing.

ALITHEA. Yes, after nine-pins. You suffer none to give her those longings you mean but yourself.

PINCHWIFE. I tell her of the vanities of the town like a confessor.

ALITHEA. A confessor! just such a confessor as he that, by forbidding a silly ostler to grease the horse's teeth, taught him to do't.

PINCHWIFE. Come, Mrs. Flippant, good precepts are lost when bad examples are still before us: the liberty you take abroad makes her hanker after it, and out of humour at home. Poor wretch! she desired not to come to London; I would bring her.

ALITHEA. Very well.

PINCHWIFE. She has been this week in town, and never desired till this afternoon to go abroad.

ALITHEA. Was she not at a play yesterday?

PINCHWIFE. Yes; but she ne'er asked me; I was myself the cause of her going.

ALITHEA. Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my example.

PINCHWIFE. Well, to-morrow night I shall be rid of you; and the next day, before 'tis light, she and I'll be rid of the town, and my dreadful apprehensions.—Come, be not melancholy; for thou sha't go into the country after to-morrow, dearest.

ALITHEA. Great comfort!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Pish! what d'ye tell me of the country for?

PINCHWIFE. How's this! what, pish at the country?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Let me alone; I am not well.

PINCHWIFE. O, if that be all—what ails my dearest?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Truly, I don't know: but I have not been well since you told me there was a gallant at the play in love with me.

PINCHWIFE. Ha!——

ALITHEA. That's by my example too!

PINCHWIFE. Nay, if you are not well, but are so concerned, because a lewd fellow chanced to lie, and say he liked you, you'll make me sick too.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Of what sickness?

PINCHWIFE. O, of that which is worse than the plague, jealousy.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Pish, you jeer! I'm sure there's no such disease in our receipt-book at home.

PINCHWIFE. No, thou never met'st with it, poor innocent.—Well, if thou cuckold me, 'twill be my own fault—for cuckolds and bastards are generally makers of their own fortune. *Aside*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Well, but pray, bud, let's go to a play to-night.

PINCHWIFE. 'Tis just done, she comes from it. But why are you so eager to see a play?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the player-men, and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me: that's all, dear bud.

PINCHWIFE. Is that all, dear bud?

ALITHEA. This proceeds from my example!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. But if the play be done, let's go abroad, however, dear bud.

PINCHWIFE. Come, have a little patience and thou shalt go into the country on Friday.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Therefore I would see first some sights to tell my neighbours of. Nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

ALITHEA. I'm the cause of this desire too!

PINCHWIFE. But now I think on't, who, who was the cause of Horner's coming to my lodgings to-day? That was you.

ALITHEA. No, you, because you would not let him see your handsome wife out of your lodging.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Why, O Lord! did the gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

PINCHWIFE. No, no.—You are not the cause of that damned question too, Mistress Alithea?—(*Aside.*) Well, she's in the right of it. He is in love with my wife—and comes after her—'tis so—but I'll nip his love in the bud; lest he should follow us into the country, and break his chariot-wheel near our house, on purpose for an excuse to come to't. But I think I know the town.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Come, pray, bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So! the obstinacy already of the town-wife, and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one.—(*Aloud.*) Sister, how shall we do, that she may not be seen or known?

ALITHEA. Let her put on her mask.

PINCHWIFE. Pshaw! a mask makes people but the more inquisitive, and is as ridiculous a disguise as a stage-beard. her shape, stature, habit will be known. And if we should meet with Horner, he would be sure to take acquaintance with us, must wish her joy, kiss her, talk to her, leer upon her, and the devil and all. No, I'll not use her to a mask, 'tis dangerous, for masks have made more cuckolds than the best faces that ever were known.

ALITHEA. How will you do then?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, shall we go? The Exchange will be shut, and I have a mind to see that.

PINCHWIFE. So—I have it—I'll dress her up in the suit we are to carry down to her brother, little Sir James; nay, I understand the town-tricks. Come, let's go dress her. A mask! no—a woman masked, like a covered dish, gives a man curiosity and appetite; when, it may be, uncovered, 'twould turn his stomach: no, no.

ALITHEA Indeed your comparison is something a greasy one. but I had a gentle gallant used to say, A beauty masked, like the sun in eclipse, gathers together more gazers than if it shined out. *Exeunt*

Horner and Harcourt Torment a Jealous Husband

[*The scene is the New Exchange. Pinchwife has been badgered into bringing his wife out to see the town, but has disguised her as a young man. Harcourt has been addressing Alithea and Pinchwife when Horner and Dorilant come up to them.*]

HORNER. How now, Pinchwife!

PINCHWIFE. Your servant.

HORNER. What! I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds.

PINCHWIFE. I have business, sir, and must mind it; your business is pleasure, therefore you and I must go different ways.

HORNER. Well, you may go on, but this pretty young gentleman—— *Takes hold of Mrs. Pinchwife*

HARCOURT. The lady——

DORILANT. And the maid——

HORNER. Shall stay with us; for I suppose their business is the same with ours, pleasure.

PINCHWIFE. 'Sdeath, he knows her, she carries it so sillily! yet if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first. *Aside*

ALITHEA. Pray, let us go, sir.

PINCHWIFE. Come, come——

HORNER. (*To Mrs. Pinchwife.*) Had you not rather stay with us?—Prithee, Pinchwife, who is this pretty young gentleman?

PINCHWIFE. One to whom I'm a guardian.—(*Aside.*) I wish I could keep her out of your hands.

HORNER. Who is he? I never saw anything so pretty in all my life.

PINCHWIFE. Pshaw! do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth, you'll put him out of countenance.—Come away, brother. *Offers to take her away*

HORNER. O, your brother!

PINCHWIFE. Yes, my wife's brother.—Come, come, she'll stay supper for us.

HORNER. I thought so, for he is very like her I saw you at the play with, whom I told you I was in love with.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) O jeminy! is that he that was in love with me? I am glad on't, I vow, for he's a curious fine gentleman, and I love him already, too.—(*To Pinchwife.*) Is this he, bud?

PINCHWIFE. Come away, come away. *To his Wife*

HORNER. Why, what haste are you in? why won't you let me talk with him?

PINCHWIFE. Because you'll debauch him, he's yet young and innocent, and I would not have him debauched for anything in the world.—(*Aside.*) How she gazes on him! the devil!

HORNER. Harcourt, Dorilant, look you here, this is the likeness of that dowdy he told us of, his wife; did you ever see a lovelier creature? The rogue has reason to be jealous of his wife, since she is like him, for she would make all that see her in love with her.

HARCOURT. And, as I remember now, she is as like him here as can be.

DORILANT. She is indeed very pretty, if she be like him.

HORNER. Very pretty? a very pretty commendation!—she is a glorious creature, beautiful beyond all things I ever beheld.

PINCHWIFE So, so.

HARCOURT. More beautiful than a poet's first mistress of imagination.

HORNER. Or another man's last mistress of flesh and blood.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, now you jeer, sir; pray don't jeer me.

PINCHWIFE. Come, come.—(*Aside.*) By Heavens, she'll discover herself!

HORNER. I speak of your sister, sir.

PINCHWIFE. Ay, but saying she was handsome, if like him, made him blush.—(*Aside.*) I am upon a rack!

HORNER. Methinks he is so handsome he should not be a man.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) O, there 'tis out! he has discovered her! I am not able to suffer any longer.—(*To his Wife.*) Come, come away, I say.

HORNER. Nay, by your leave, sir, he shall not go yet.—(*Aside to them.*) Harcourt, Dorilant, let us torment this jealous rogue a little.

HARCOURT, DORILANT. How?

HORNER. I'll show you.

PINCHWIFE. Come, pray let him go, I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you his sister stays supper for us.

HORNER. Does she? Come then, we'll all go to sup with he and thee.

PINCHWIFE. No, now I think on't, having stayed so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed.—(*Aside.*) I wish she and I were well out of their hands. —(*To his Wife.*) Come, I must rise early tomorrow, come.

HORNER Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young gentleman, present my humble service to her.

MRS PINCHWIFE. Thank you heartily, sir.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) 'Sdeath, she will discover herself yet in spite of me.—(*Aloud.*) He is something more civil to you, for your kindness to his sister, than I am, it seems.

HORNER. Tell her, dear sweet little gentleman, for all your brother there, that you have revived the love I had for her at first sight in the playhouse.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. But did you love her indeed, and indeed?

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So, so.—(*Aloud.*) Away, I say.

HORNER. Nay, stay.—Yes, indeed, and indeed, pray do you tell her so, and give her this kiss from me. *Kisses her*

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) O Heavens! what do I suffer? Now 'tis too plain he knows her, and yet——

HORNER. And this, and this—— *Kisses her again*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. What do you kiss me for? I am no woman.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So, there, 'tis out.—(*Aloud.*) Come, I cannot, nor will stay any longer.

HORNER. Nay, they shall send your lady a kiss too. Here Harcourt, Dorilant, will you not? *They kiss her*

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) How! do I suffer this? Was I not accusing another just now for this rascally patience, in permitting his wife to be kissed before his face? Ten thousand ulcers gnaw away their lips.—(*Aloud.*) Come, come.

HORNER. Good night, dear little gentleman; madam, good night; farewell, Pinchwife.—(*Apart to Harcourt and Dorilant.*) Did not I tell you I would raise his jealous gall? *Exeunt Horner, Harcourt, and Dorilant*

Mrs. Pinchwife Learns How to Outwit Her Husband

The scene is Pinchwife's bedchamber
Pinchwife and Mrs. Pinchwife are discovered

PINCHWIFE. Come, tell me, I say.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Lord! han't I told it a hundred times over?

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) I would try, if in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I could find her altering it in the least circumstance; for if her story be false, she is so too.—(*Aloud.*) Come, how was't, baggage?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

PINCHWIFE. No, you take more in telling it I find; but speak, how was't?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. He carried me up into the house next to the Exchange.

PINCHWIFE. So, and you two were only in the room!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Yes, for he sent away a youth that was there, for some dried fruit, and China oranges.

PINCHWIFE. Did he so? Damn him for it—and for——

MRS. PINCHWIFE. But presently came up the gentlewoman of the house.

PINCHWIFE. Oh, 'twas well she did; but what did he do whilst the fruit came?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. He kissed me a hundred times, and told me he fancied he kissed my fine sister, meaning me, you know, whom he said he loved

with all his soul, and bid me to be sure to tell her so, and to desire her to be at her window, by eleven of the clock this morning, and he would walk under it at that time.

PINCHWIFE. And he was as good as his word, very punctual; a pox reward him for't. *Aside*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Well, and he said if you were not within, he would come up to her, meaning me, you know, bud, still.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So—he knew her certainly; but for this confession, I am obliged to her simplicity.—(*Aloud.*) But what, you stood very still when he kissed you?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Yes, I warrant you; would you have had me discovered myself?

PINCHWIFE. But you told me he did some beastliness to you, as you call it, what was't?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Why, he put——

PINCHWIFE. What?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Why, he put the tip of his tongue between my lips, and so mousled me—and I said, I'd bite it.

PINCHWIFE. An eternal canker seize it, for a dog!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither, for to say truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

PINCHWIFE. The devil! you were satisfied with it then, and would do it again?

MRS PINCHWIFE. Not unless he should force me.

PINCHWIFE. Force you, changeling! I tell you, no woman can be forced.

MRS PINCHWIFE. Yes, but she may sure, by such a one as he, for he's a proper, goodly, strong man; 'tis hard, let me tell you, to resist him.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So, 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me; but the sight of him will increase her aversion for me and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me and satisfy him, all idiot as she is. Love! 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding. Out of Nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves, as she and Heaven intended 'em, but damned Love—well—I must strangle that little monster whilst I can deal with him.—(*Aloud.*) Go fetch pen, ink, and paper out of the next room

MRS PINCHWIFE. Yes, bud. *Exit*

PINCHWIFE. Why should women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desires, more soliciting passions, more lust, and more of the devil.

Re-enter Mrs. Pinchwife

Come, minx, sit down and write.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Ay, dear bud, but I can't do't very well.

PINCHWIFE. I wish you could not at all.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. But what should I write for?

PINCHWIFE. I'll have you write a letter to your lover.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. O Lord, to the fine gentleman a letter!

PINCHWIFE. Yes, to the fine gentleman.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Lord, you do but jeer: sure you jest.

PINCHWIFE. I am not so merry: come, write as I bid you.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. What, do you think I am a fool?

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling.—(*Aloud.*) But you had best begin.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Indeed, and indeed, but I won't, so I won't.

PINCHWIFE. Why?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Because he's in town; you may send for him if you will.

PINCHWIFE. Very well, you would have him brought to you; is it come to this? I say, take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Lord, what d'ye make a fool of me for? Don't I know that letters are never writ but from the country to London, and from London into the country? Now he's in town, and I am in town too; therefore I can't write to him, you know.

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside.*) So, I am glad it is no worse; she is innocent enough yet.—(*Aloud.*) Yes, you may, when your husband bids you, write letters to people that are in town.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. O, may I so? then I'm satisfied.

PINCHWIFE. Come, begin·—"Sir"— *Dictates*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Shan't I say, "Dear Sir?"—You know one says always something more than bare "Sir."

PINCHWIFE. Write as I bid you, or I will write whore with this penknife in your face.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, good bud—"Sir"— *Writes*

PINCHWIFE. "Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces"—Write!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Nay, why should I say so? You know I told you he had a sweet breath.

PINCHWIFE. Write!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Let me but put out "loathed."

PINCHWIFE. Write, I say!

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Well then. *Writes*

PINCHWIFE. Let's see, what have you writ?—(*Takes the paper and reads.*) "Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces"—Thou impudent creature! where is "nauseous" and "loathed"?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. I can't abide to write such filthy words.

PINCHWIFE. Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will spoil thy writing with this. I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief. *Holds up the penknife*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. O Lord! I will.

PINCHWIFE. So—so—let's see now.—(*Reads.*) "Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces"—go on—"yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them"—so— *She writes*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. I have writ it.

PINCHWIFE. On, then—"I then concealed myself from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies."— *She writes*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. So—

PINCHWIFE. "The same reason, now I am out of your hands"— *She writes*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. So—

PINCHWIFE. "Makes me own to you my unfortunate, though innocent frolic, of being in man's clothes"— *She writes*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. So—

PINCHWIFE. "That you may for evermore cease to pursue her, who hates and detests you"— *She writes on*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. So—heigh! *Sighs*

PINCHWIFE. What, do you sigh?—"detests you—as much as she loves her husband and her honour."

MRS. PINCHWIFE. I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe I should write such a letter.

PINCHWIFE. What, he'd expect a kinder from you? Come, now your name only.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. What, shan't I say "Your most faithful humble servant till death?"

PINCHWIFE. No, tormenting fiend!—(*Aside.*) Her style, I find, would be very soft.—(*Aloud.*) Come, wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle, and write on the backside, "For Mr. Horner." *Exit*

MRS. PINCHWIFE. "For Mr. Horner."—So, I am glad he has told me his name. Dear Mr. Horner! but why should I send thee such a letter that will vex thee, and make thee angry with me?—Well, I will not send it.—Ay, but then my husband will kill me—for I see plainly he won't let me love Mr. Horner—but what care I for my husband?—I won't, so I won't, send poor Mr. Horner such a letter—But then my husband—but oh, what if I writ at bottom my husband made me write it?—Ay, but then my husband would see't—Can one have no shift? ah, a London woman would have had a hundred presently. Stay—what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up

like this, and write upon't too? Ay, but then my husband would see't—I don't know what to do.—But yet evads I'll try, so I will—for I will not send this letter to poor Mr. Horner, come what will on't.

"Dear, sweet Mr. Horner"—(*Writes and repeats what she writes.*)—so—"my husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly letter; but I won't"—so—"and would have me forbid you loving me; but I won't"—so—"and would have me say to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Horner; but I won't tell a lie for him"—there—"for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together"—so—"I could not help treading on your toe under the table"—so—"or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, till you saw me"—very well—"and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together"—so—"but I must make haste before my husband comes: and now he has taught me to write letters, you shall have longer ones from me, who am, dear, dear, poor, dear Mr. Horner, your most humble friend, and servant to command till death,—Margery Pinchwife."

Stay, I must give him a hint at bottom—so—now wrap it up just like t'other—so—now write "For Mr. Horner"—But oh now, what shall I do with it? for here comes my husband.

Re-enter Pinchwife

PINCHWIFE. (*Aside*). I have been detained by a sparkish coxcomb, who pretended a visit to me; but I fear 'twas to my wife—(*Aloud.*) What, have you done?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Ay, ay, bud, just now.

PINCHWIFE. Let's see't: what d'ye tremble for? what, you would not have it go?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Here—(*Aside.*) No, I must not give him that: so I had been served if I had given him this. *He opens and reads the first letter*

PINCHWIFE. Come, where's the wax and seal?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. (*Aside*). Lord, what shall I do now? Nay, then I have it. —(*Aloud.*) Pray let me see't. Lord, you will think me so arrant a fool, I cannot seal a letter; I will do't, so I will.

Snatches the letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.

PINCHWIFE. Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I would not have you.

MRS. PINCHWIFE. So, han't I done it curiously?—(*Aside.*) I think I have; there's my letter going to Mr. Horner, since he'll needs have me send letters to folks.

PINCHWIFE. 'Tis very well; but I warrant, you would not have it go now?

MRS. PINCHWIFE. Yes, indeed, but I would, bud, now.

PINCHWIFE. Well, you are a good girl then.

DRYDEN: POLITICAL SATIRE AND MOCK-EPIC AT THEIR PEAKS



IN THE violent literary-political battles that flared throughout the last years of Charles II, Absalom and Achitophel *and* Mac Flecknoe *constitute two of the most powerful broadsides. The King had no legitimate children His legal heir was his brother James, the forbidding and bigoted Duke of York, who was as much hated for his gloomy arrogance as he was feared for his inflexible devotion to the Church of Rome. There was a plot, engineered by the Earl of Shaftesbury, to imprison Charles and place his bastard son, the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, on the throne; it was discovered, and Monmouth lost his head Dryden, though not till later a convert to the Catholic faith, defended the legitimate succession.*

Absalom and Achitophel *is essentially political satire, in which Dryden used the Old Testament story of Absalom's rebellion against King David, his father, as a device for damnifying the conspirators. The Biblical dis-*

guise, transparent enough to be seen through at once, nevertheless helps at the same time to endow the legitimate cause with something of the dignity of representing the very will of God. But the great glory of the poem is in its magnificent character portraits: Shaftesbury as Achitophel, Buckingham as Zimri, Bethel as Shimei, and the horrible and bloody perjuror Titus Oates as Corah:

> Erect thyself, thou monumental brass:
> High as the Serpent of thy metal made.

Dryden breathes into these great images an energy that even today fills them with a titanic and vibrant power. He is rollickingly jovial with Buckingham, but with a sting in the very good humor; lethally bitter with Bethel; with Shaftesbury as icily just—such is the impression he produces—as the Angel of Death itself.

Above all in his dealing with Achitophel does Dryden become tremendous. There is a close-knit intensity of thought conveyed by those paralleled or antithetical epithets whose very consonants are hard with accusation: "close designs and crooked counsels"; "unfixed in principle and place"; "resolved to ruin, or to rule the state." There is the terrible impression of a contorted and poisonous crouching in darkness conveyed by the picture of Achitophel begetting his son while "his soul did huddled notions try"; there is the noble indignation of the outburst, "How safe is treason, and how sacred ill!" And last, there is the cold magnanimity with which he concludes by praising his victim's incorruptible probity as a judge. This splendid tribute lends the whole denunciation that has gone before a color of absolute truth.

The peak of Dryden's satiric achievement, however, is not Absalom and Achitophel, but Mac Flecknoe. Thomas Shadwell, the hero celebrated in this mock-epic, was a third-rate pamphleteer and worse than third-rate poet and dramatist who had made himself a spokesman for Shaftesbury's party. Never before Dryden had the mock heroic been done with such brilliance and originality. It is easy to travesty Virgil or Homer just by letting Dido's grief mount to a bathos of musical-comedy howls and blubberings, or by having Achilles wallop Hector resoundingly on the backside as they marathon round and round the walls of Troy. Hundreds of schoolboys and writers of lampoons have used these very tricks. Dryden has no such slavish dependence on his epic models, and no such cheap humor. Instead of imitating particular scenes, he invents a mock-coronation in the realms of

Nonsense. The dignity and elevation of the epic style, from which he never descends, become further instruments of comic deflation.

Dryden makes masterly use of that device by which a speaker employs as commendation statements that his audience will invariably understand in a contrary sense. The retiring monarch lards his long panegyric of Shadwell with praise, but his professional bias ensures that his every glowing tribute will prove a brickbat. "Thy inoffensive satires never bite," he says, beaming; and the mild adjective is like a seat insidiously removed from behind as one descends. Or with the innocent conviction that he is bestowing an accolade, he remarks that Shadwell "never deviates into sense.*" Even the cautionary device of seventeenth-century satire, representing his victim's name only by its initial letters and a long dash, Dryden can smear with insinuation*

But loads of Sh - - - - - - almost choked the way,

he writes; the rhythm requires "Shadwell," but our imagination supplies a more common noun.

There is no venom, however, even in the vulgarities of the poem, only a sort of grave and solemn high spirits trembling upon the verge of laughter. That good humor, in fact, explains part of Dryden's success in imposing his judgment so thoroughly on later generations that only an occasional scholar dips into Shadwell to see if it is true The general truth and the brilliance of invention do the rest. Shadwell is lifted to majestic eminence as an eternal type of dullness. There he stands, gleaming forever in the lacquer of Dryden's wit.

Most of the allusions of the poem are self-explanatory. Sir George Etherege was the witty author of Love in a Tub *and* The Man of Mode; *Dorimant, Sir Fopling Flutter, and some of the others are characters from his plays.* Psyche, Love's Kingdom, *and* The Virtuoso *were plays by Shadwell, and Bruce and Longvil, who spring the booby trap at the end, are characters from the last of these.*

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

««« The poem was first published in 1681 »»»

Dryden Raises Shaftesbury to a Terrible Eminence of Treachery

Of these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son;
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin, or to rule the state.
To compass this the triple bond he broke;
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.

So easy still it proves in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will,
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own?
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress;
Swift of despatch, and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,
With virtue only proper to the gown;
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle, that oppressed the noble seed;
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And heaven had wanted one immortal song.
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
Disdained the golden fruit to gather free,
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.

He Blasts Bethel as Penny-Pinching and Hypocritical Puritan

Shimei, whose youth did early promise bring
Of zeal to God, and hatred of his King,
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
And never broke the Sabbath, but *for gain:*
Nor was he ever known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the Government. . . .
The City, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate:
His hand a vare of justice did uphold;
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.

During his office, treason was no crime.
The sons of Belial had a glorious time.
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
Yet loved his wicked neighbor like himself.

When two or three were gathered to declaim
Against the Monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them.
And, if they cursed the King while he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company.

MAC FLECKNOE

OR, A SATIRE UPON THE TRUE-BLUE-PROTESTANT POET T. S.

*** This poem, here given almost complete, was first published in 1682 ***

He Crowns Shadwell as Supreme of Dullards

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was called to empire, and had governed long;
In prose and verse, was owned, without dispute,
Thro' all the realms of *Nonsense*, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the State;
And, pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried: " 'Tis resolved, for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Sh—— alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
But Sh—— never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,

Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget, came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-timed oars before the royal barge,
Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of a host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets tossed.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpened thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
Echoes from Pissing Alley Sh—— call,
And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyche's* rhyme;
Tho' they in number as in sense excel:
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vowed he ne'er would act Villerius more."
Here stopped the good old sire, and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.
  Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclined,)
An ancient fabric raised t' inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
A watchtower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,

Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a Nursery erects its head,
Where queens are formed, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins the gods defy. . . .
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously designed his Sh——'s throne;
For ancient Dekker prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense. . . .

Now Empress Fame had published the renown
Of Sh——'s coronation thro' the town.
Roused by report of Fame, the nations meet,
From near Bunhill, and distant Watling Street.
No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay;
From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,
But loads of Sh—— almost choked the way.
The hoary prince in majesty appeared,
High on a throne of his own labours reared.
At his right hand our young Ascanius sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State.
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dulness played around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Sh—— *swore, nor should his vow be vain,*
That he till death true dulness would maintain;
And, in his father's right, and realm's defense,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom to his right he did convey,
At once his scepter, and his rule of sway,
Whose righteous lore the prince had practiced young,
And from whose loins recorded *Psyche* sprung.

His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honors of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:
"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbados on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!"
He paused, and all the people cried, "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,
And in their folly shew the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defense,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,
Sir Formal's oratory will be thine:

Sir Formal, tho' unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogleby *thy envy raise.*
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where sold he bargains, 'whip-stitch, kiss my arse,'
Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfused, as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dulness, 'tis inclined;
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretense
Of likeness, thine's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep,
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite.
In thy felonious heart tho' venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or, if thou wouldst thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
He said. but his last words were scarcely heard,

For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepared,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

CONGREVE TRANSFORMS THE BEAU MONDE TO FAIRYLAND



THE WORLD that Wycherley had painted with all his coarse animal vitality is transfigured by the airy brilliance of Congreve into quite another realm. It is an iridescent blending of reality and fairyland, if Oberon and Puck were to don white satin breeches, lace ruffles, and silver coat, and flash a court sword, if Titania were to powder her hair and half reveal her pearly bosom above a bodice like a calyx and a bouffant shimmer of silk, it would be something like the gleaming and roseate beau monde Congreve has created.

The rankness of vice, the ugliness of cruelty, have all been refined away; what is left is not what the fashionable world was but the ideal essence that in part it aspired to be and sometimes imagined itself to be. Here all are wits, even the fops and fools, the very insipidities of the poetasters have grace and charm; gallantry ceases to be a disguise for fornication and be-

comes a dancing game; deceived husbands are metamorphosed into some thing fabulous like a unicorn, only two-horned, carrying their whimsical affliction into some upper region of cloud-cuckoldom.

Congreve marries artificiality to grace with a workmanship so exquisite that elaboration itself becomes natural ease. Human speech was never so sparkling as this, epigrams showering from the lips like the flowers and jewels in the fairy tale, and yet they fall on the air with the very ripple and rhythm of oral utterance. The wit is an unceasing flicker of harmless lightning. Reproached for making ladies blush, Petulant replies, "Let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand." Witwoud illumines an entire code of manners in a single shining phrase by enquiring, "Fainall, how does your lady?" and adding, "Gad, I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure a question at once so foreign and domestic." And yet these fools, for all their felicity and wit of speech, are still unmistakably fools; when Mirabell remarks that if Sir Wilful is only Witwoud's half brother, "he may be but half a fool," Witwoud, totally missing the direction of the insult, responds, "Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him."

This is indeed the supreme ingenuity of Congreve, that his satire is like a Chinese sphere of carved ivory, satire within satire, each sphere intricately wrought and perfect. The would-be wits and men of fashion are satirists of the world they live in; they are satirized by the beaux and belles like Mirabell and Millamant; and Congreve, lightly, gracefully, almost admiringly, satirizes his hero Mirabell and his heroine Millamant. Of all these rainbow characters, to be sure, Mirabell comes nearest to having a true sense of values He sees clearly all the affectations and pretty-petulant follies of Millamant, and still finds her, half because of them, irresistible, still perceives the exquisite human creature beneath the coquette. As we do: words are hardly bright enough to do justice to Millamant, delicious, alluring, vain, tyrannical, and absurd. Unless we borrow those of Mirabell "Here she comes, i' faith, full sail, with her fan spread and her streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders."

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

*** *The Way of the World* was first produced in 1700. The scenes given here are from Act I, Scene 2, Act II, Scene 2, and Act IV, Scene 1 ***

Witwoud Depreciates His Half-Brother and Praises His Friend Petulant

The scene is a Chocolate House. Fainall and Mirabell are talking together, with Betty, a waitress, in the background. Enter Witwoud

WITWOUD. Afford me your compassion, my dears! pity me, Fainall! Mirabell, pity me!

MIRABELL. I do from my soul.

FAINALL. Why, what's the matter?

WITWOUD. No letters for me, Betty?

BETTY. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

WITWOUD. Ay, but no other?

BETTY. No, sir.

WITWOUD. That's hard, that's very hard.—A messenger! a mule, a beast of burden! he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another: and what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

MIRABELL. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

WITWOUD. Ay, ay, my half brother. My half brother he is, no nearer upon honour.

MIRABELL. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

WITWOUD. Good, good, Mirabell, *le drôle!* good, good, hang him, don't let's talk of him —Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say but she's the best woman in the world.

FAINALL. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

WITWOUD. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall —Your judgment, Mirabell.

MIRABELL. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

WITWOUD. Mirabell?

MIRABELL. Ay.

WITWOUD. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons,—gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you!

MIRABELL. I thank you heartily, heartily.

WITWOUD. No, but prithee excuse me:—my memory is such a memory.

MIRABELL. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

FAINALL. What have you done with Petulant?

WITWOUD. He's reckoning his money—my money it was.—I have no luck to-day.

FAINALL. You may allow him to win of you at play: for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee; since you monopolise the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

MIRABELL. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

WITWOUD. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates—Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit; nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him neither.—And if he had any judgment in the world, he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

FAINALL. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred?

WITWOUD. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own:—no more breeding than a bum-bailiff, that I grant you:—'tis pity, faith, the fellow has fire and life.

MIRABELL. What, courage?

WITWOUD. Hum, faith I don't know as to that, I can't say as to that—Yes, faith, in a controversy, he'll contradict anybody.

MIRABELL. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

WITWOUD. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks;—we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him—I can defend most of his faults, except one or two· one he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him:—that, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

MIRABELL. Ay, marry, what's that, Witwoud?

WITWOUD. O pardon me!—expose the infirmities of my friend!—No, my dear, excuse me there.

FAINALL. What, I warrant he's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

WITWOUD. No, no; what if he be? 'tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

MIRABELL. Maybe you think him too positive?

WITWOUD. No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

FAINALL. Too illiterate?

WITWOUD. That! that's his happiness.—his want of learning gives him the more opportunities to show his natural parts.

MIRABELL. He wants words?

WITWOUD. Ay: but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

FAINALL. He's impudent?

WITWOUD. No, that's not it.

MIRABELL. Vain?

WITWOUD. No.

MIRABELL. What! he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion?

WITWOUD. Truths! ha! ha! ha! no, no, since you will have it,—I mean, he never speaks truth at all,—that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

Millamant Sails In, Triumphant and Enqueened

The scene is St. James's Park. Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall talking; enter Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, and Mincing

MIRABELL. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and her streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders, ha, no, I cry her mercy!

MRS. FAINALL. I see but one poor empty sculler, and he tows her woman after him.

MIRABELL. (*To Mrs. Millamant*) You seem to be unattended, madam—you used to have the *beau monde* throng after you, and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

WITWOUD. Like moths about a candle.—I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

MIRABELL. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

WITWOUD. Mirabell?

MIRABELL. Ay.

WITWOUD. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons;—gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you!

MIRABELL. I thank you heartily, heartily.

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MIRABELL. What, courage?

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MIRABELL. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

WITWOUD. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks,—we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him—I can defend most of his faults, except one or two· one he has, that's the truth on't, if he were my brother, I could not acquit him:—that, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

MIRABELL. Ay, marry, what's that, Witwoud?

MIRABELL. Names!

MRS. MILLAMANT. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that—good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis: nor go to Hyde-park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRABELL. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MRS. MILLAMANT. Trifles!—As liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance: or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

MIRABELL. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account.—Well, have I liberty to offer conditions—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

MRS. MILLAMANT. You have free leave; propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRABELL. I thank you —*Imprimis* then, I covenant, that your acquaintance be general, that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex, no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy duck to wheedle you a fop-scrambling to the play in a mask—then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out—and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up, and prove my constancy.

MRS. MILLAMANT. Detestable *imprimis!* I go to the play in a mask!

MIRABELL. *Item*, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled-skins, and I know not what—hogs' bones, hares' gall, pigwater, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in what d'ye call it court. *Item*, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlasses, etc.—*Item*, when you shall be breeding—

MRS. MILLAMANT. Ah! name it not.

MIRABELL. Which may be presumed with a blessing on our endeavours.

MRS. MILLAMANT. Odious endeavours!

MIRABELL. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit—but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. as likewise to genuine and authorised tea-table talk—such as mending fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—but that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows, for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbados waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary—but for cowslip wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow.—These proviso admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

MRS. MILLAMANT. O horrid provisos! filthy strong-waters! I toast fellows! odious men! I hate your odious provisos

MIRABELL. Then we are agreed! shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Enter Mrs. Fainall

MRS. MILLAMANT. Fainall, what shall I do? shall I have him? I think I must have him.

MRS. FAINALL. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

MRS. MILLAMANT. Well then—I'll take my death I'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

MRS. FAINALL. Fy! fy! have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms for I am sure you have a mind to him.

MRS. MILLAMANT. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—here kiss my hand though.—So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

ADDISON: ARBITER ELEGANTIARUM OF THE MIDDLE CLASS



WITH THE *growing power and ease of the commercial middle class a new reading public was coming into being Pluming itself on its prudential virtues, disapproving the laxity of aristocratic morals, and resenting the Olympian superiority of the born gentleman, it nevertheless envied the polished grace and cultural assurance of the upper class. Like some of our nineteenth-century American millionaires transforming themselves from steel puddlers and junk peddlers into bibliophiles and art connoisseurs, eighteenth-century merchants were determined to learn manners and acquire taste and elegance of judgment.*

Joseph Addison *made himself the guide of this rising class. A gentleman himself, he bowed to middle-class virtue by deploring licentiousness and giving prudence and industry a pat on the back, nothing he said would ever disturb the most deep-seated convictions of commercial respectability. But he allowed himself to twit his readers out of their more superficial prejudices, in somewhat the same way that* The New Yorker *twits the provincialism that its audience has only recently—or only half—deserted for the heady languors of sophistication*

Addison

The very substance of Addison's Tatler *and* Spectator *essays was their gracefully and charmingly disguised instruction in taste and breeding* Suaviter in modo, *smooth' in manner, he entertained while he taught, gently ticking off a breach of manners in one paper, illustrating a principle of literary criticism by a witty story in another, here and there letting fall a Latin tag, and supplying its translation so unobtrusively that the reader hardly notices he has been told. With the most delicate adroitness Addison refrained from the airs of the pedagogue; he was all witty man of the world smiling over the humors of existence with his equals. His very manner was a lesson in manners.*

Addison's technique is that of the urbane Horatian satire translated to prose. With the lightest of touches he "dissects" a beau's head, and finds there "not a real brain, but only something like it," filled with mirrors for contemplating itself, love letters, snuff, falsehoods, wind, and froth; or a coquette's heart, and finds it slippery, hollow, and cold as ice. He insinuates the absurdity of a pedantic insistence on the "unity of place" in a drama by bringing on his own little stage a Sir Timothy Tittle puffing and out of breath with the effort of following a dramatist's changes of scene. He lets the poetaster Ned Softly repeat his insipid singsong verses and remain amusingly blind to the tenor of Mr. Bickerstaff's polite comments; meanwhile the reader insensibly learns that poetry embraces more than smoothness, classical allusions, and conceits.

There is more than one difference between the raillery of Horace and that of Addison, but a cogent distinction is that Horace laughs at himself even oftener than he laughs at the world. But Addison is too self-assuredly above the world for that. The jokes he shares with his readers are always assumed to be at the expense of others. Addison knows *that he himself is unstained by any of the solecisms and breaches of form he smiles his superior smile about; he* tells *his readers that they too, being men of taste, are of course smiling with him, and they* are *smiling with him, and feeling complacently above the very blunder he has just taught them to avoid. The self-complacence is genuine; the tone to his audience a courteous artifice. Doubtless this sort of snobbery is inevitable to what Addison was trying to do But it explains why we love Horace more than we do this high-periwigged, impeccable* arbiter elegantiarum.

NED SOFTLY, THE POET

««« *The Tatler*, No. 163, 1709-1711 »»»

Idem inficeto est inficetior rure,
Simul poemata attigit; neque idem unquam
Æque est beatus, ac poema quum scribit:
Tam gaudet in se, tamque se ipse miratur.
Nimirum idem omnes fallimur; neque est quisquam
Quem non in aliqua re videre Suffnum
Possis—
Catul. de Suffeno, xx, 14.

(Suffenus has no more wit than a mere clown when he attempts to write verses, and yet he is never happier than when he is scribbling: so much does he admire himself and his compositions. And, indeed, this is the foible of every one of us, for there is no man living who is not a Suffenus in one thing or other.)

Will's Coffee-house, April 24.

I YESTERDAY came hither about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over all the newspapers; but upon my sitting down, I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. "Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, "I observe by a late paper of yours, that you and I are just of a humour, for you must know, of all impertinences, there is nothing which I so much hate as news. I never read a gazette in my life; and never trouble my head about our armies, whether they win or lose; or in what part of the world they lie encamped." Without giving me time to reply, he drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me, "That he had something which would entertain me more agreeably; and that he would desire my judgment upon every line, for that we had time enough before us until the company came in."

Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller is his favourite: and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book, which he repeats upon occasion, to show his reading, and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art, but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns,

points, and quibbles, which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets, and practised by those who want genius and strength to represent, after the manner of the ancients, simplicity in its natural beauty and perfection.

Finding myself unavoidably engaged in such a conversation, I was resolved to turn my pain into a pleasure, and to divert myself as well as I could with so very odd a fellow. "You must understand," says Ned, "that the sonnet I am going to read to you was written upon a lady who showed me some verses of her own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it."

Upon which he began to read as follows:

TO MIRA, ON HER INCOMPARABLE POEMS

1

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine,
And tune your soft melodious notes,
You seem a sister of the Nine,
Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

2

I fancy, when your song you sing,
Your song you sing with so much art,
Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing;
For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Why," says I, "this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt: every verse hath something in it that piques; and then the dart in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram (for so I think you critics call it) as ever entered into the thought of a poet." "Dear Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, shaking me by the hand, "everybody knows you to be a judge of these things; and, to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's translation of Horace's 'Art of Poetry' three several times before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it, for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine.

"This is," says he, "when you have your garland on, when you are writing verses." To which I replied, "I know your *meaning*. a *metaphor!*" "The same," said he, and went on.

And tune your soft melodious notes.

"Pray observe the gliding of that verse; there is scarce a consonant in it· I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it." "Truly," said I, "I think it as good as the former." "I am very glad to hear you say so," says he; "but mind the next

You seem a sister of the Nine.

"That is," says he, "you seem a sister of the Muses; for, if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their opinion, that there were nine of them." "I remember it very well," said I; "but pray proceed."

Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

"Phœbus," says he, "was the god of Poetry. These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then to take off from the air of learning, which Phœbus and the Muses have given to this first stanza, you may observe, how it falls all of a sudden into the familiar—'in petticoats'!"

Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

"Let us now," says I, "enter upon the second stanza; I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor.

I fancy when your song you sing.

"It is very right," says he, "but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still a doubt upon me whether, in the second line it should be—'Your song you sing, or, You sing your song'? You shall hear them both:—

I fancy, when your song you sing.
(Your song you sing with so much art);

or,

I fancy, when your song you sing,
(You sing your song with so much art).

"Truly," said I, "the turn is so natural either way, that you have made me almost giddy with it." "Dear sir," said he, grasping me by the hand, "you have a great deal of patience; but pray what do you think of the next verse?"

Your pen was pluck'd from Cupid's wing.

"Think!" says I, "I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose" "That was my meaning," says he· "I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we come now to the last, which sums up the whole matter.

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Pray how do you like that *Ah!* doth it not make a pretty figure in that place? *Ah!*—it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out at being pricked with it.

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"My friend Dick Easy," continued he, "assured me he would rather have written that *Ah!* than to have been the author of the Æneid. He indeed objected, that I made Mira's pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that——" "Oh! as to that," says I, "it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing." He was going to embrace me for the hint; but half a dozen critics coming into the room, whose faces he did not like, he conveyed the sonnet into his pocket, and whispered me in the ear, he would show it me again as soon as his man had written it over fair.

ALEXANDER POPE: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN POISONOUS MINIATURE



ONLY POPE himself could have compressed into a series of glittering couplets the antitheses of his own career. See him amid beauty, gallantry, and the great; surrounded by bright eyes and melting bosoms and curled locks, by steep slabs of noble faces null beneath enormous wigs—this spidery dwarf who had to be laced into a canvas corset to hold himself erect and wore three pairs of stockings to pad out his spindle shanks, always ill and always pulsing with vitality, carrying his misshapen tininess among these towering aristocrats and stately salons· a grotesque and pathetic little creature humanized only by the glowing animation of its eyes. A Roman Catholic and the son of a linen draper, he conquered a society that still despised trade and stood rigid in defense of Church and State. With no more than a sketchy education in the classics, he made a fortune of £9000 from his translations of Homer alone, and gave the

world an Iliad that turned Hector and Achilles into great gentlemen with the most grandiose of eighteenth-century manners. More violent and more venomous in his quarrels than almost any other English poet, he drew around him a circle of loving friends who included some of the most eminent men of the day: Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Gay, Swift. Afflicted by infirmities throughout "that long disease, his life," and distilling the sweet poison of his satire into verses as highly wrought as some intricate Borgian ring, he nevertheless proclaimed "All partial evil universal good" and insisted "One truth is clear, whatever is, is right."

Yet in all these respects Pope is characteristic of his age. Perhaps no other society than that of Pope's England could have endured Pope. In France, the cudgels of lackeys taught Voltaire not to be clever at the expense of the great. But, always impervious to intellect, massive and monumental in its self-complacence, the British ruling class allowed itself to be bewitched, almost made its libeler its laureate. In a way, Pope's freedom was but one demonstration more of how stable was the social order, how firmly based the cosmos on its foundations. Anything might be said in those neatly balanced lines whose very symmetry seemed to prove the logic of the universe they reduced to rule. A polished reason reigned over all. Even tenderness and brutality moved beneath a glaze of good form. The classics reflected back to the eighteenth-century mind, like an aggregation of heroic mirrors, the image of its own Chesterfieldian dignity. The flaws the poet bathed in vitriol were but blemishes, needful darknesses rather, to highlight the excellence of the whole. Without folly there is no wisdom, without poverty no wealth, without inequity no privilege. It is possible (for those having the good sense to be well born and well off) to have one's cake and eat it. The fools deserve to be foolish, and to be derided for their folly, and the vulgar to be low. "Whatever is, is right." So Pope voices the sentiments of the very aristocracy he lampoons.

It was a close-knit society. Moving between St. James's, Kensington, and Hampton Court, between fashionable London squares and great country houses, everybody knew everybody else, noble peers, duchesses, statesmen, reigning belles, beaux and gallants. It was full of gaiety, extravagance, glitter, scandal, balls, card games, visits, flirtations. Gentlemen drank, gambled, and talked politics at the clubs and coffeehouses; ladies powdered, painted, gossiped, and did not always confine themselves to tea at their tea tables. Their nucleus was urban, sophisticated, and self-centered. The rest of England was meaningful only as it ministered to them. The real world was that corporation of noble and wealthy and important persons

who dined and gambled and governed together, married and made love within its own ranks, and gave its stamp before anything could be regarded as gold. It was The World.

All Pope's poetry was written for it. And in The Rape of the Lock, *with the sunniest and most brilliant malice, he paints it. But Pope is not Congreve; instead of having the prismatic sparkle of* The Way of the World, *with its strange ethereality, the bright colors of Pope's satire are as clear-cut and deep-hued as if they were enameled. We are looking into a solid, three-dimensional world, though one reduced in scale, like the sharply defined and curiously intensified image of the universe that is reflected in a gazing globe, or the lacquered brightness of an eighteenth-century miniature on ivory. Indeed, this queer impression of beholding a luminous* little *world, rather than any element of unreality in its depiction, is what gives* The Rape of the Lock *its "fabulous, fantastic, and exquisitely mock-heroic" quality. The elfin fancifulness of the sylphs only emphasizes an effect not exclusively created by them, but by the teasing exaltation of mere elegant* petitesse *and pettiness into importance.*

For these purposes Pope's exploitation of the mock-heroic machinery was exactly fitting. People have disparagingly remarked that Pope does not have the invention displayed by Dryden in Mac Flecknoe, *but depends on effects of parody. He does; Belinda dressing for the day's achievements in coquetry and practicing her facial expressions before the glass deliberately imitates Achilles arming for battle. But it was the essence of Pope's scheme that we should perceive at the same time the absurdity of dignifying the one by comparing it with the other. In the same way, as W. H. Auden points out, when Pope says*

> *While China's earth receives the smoking tide,*

it is nonsense to think he was afraid to write

> *While boiling water on the tea was poured;*

he intentionally added to the microscopic image of tea-making the incongruously magnified image of a flood. "The sylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table, what more powerful and terrific phantoms perform on the stormy ocean or the field of battle," Dr. Johnson observes; and goes on to vindicate Pope's powers of invention by adding that he has created "a race of aerial people, never heard of before," and endowed "with powers and passions proportionate to their operations."

But the entire high-pinnacled structure only serves to underline the in-

escapable triviality of all it pictures. Pope apes the tone of admiration with such exaggerated intonations that he makes us see through the pretense. We see that Belinda's beauty comes out of boxes, that her airs and graces are rehearsed, that she is a vain coquette, and that under strain her manners crack and she begins screaming like a termagant. We see that her friend Thalestris, under cover of offering sympathy, rubs salt in Belinda's wounds and inflames the quarrel. We see that Sir Plume, unlike Congreve's fools, is merely inarticulate and feeble-minded. And we see that this whole pretty world is hollow in its very essence.

In Pope's later satires the playfulness which frolics through The Rape of the Lock gives way to more violent drives. He was hardly more than acquainted with Miss Arabella Fermor and Lord Petre, whose tiff had inspired the poem; in it he really had been impersonal and only teasingly serious. But the Imitations of Horace and the Moral Essays are more earnest, and their models were men and women whom he wanted to chastise. Sometimes they had merely pricked his touchy vanity, sometimes they were people with whom he had had bitter feuds, sometimes there is no known reason for animosity to them. Whatever the causes, an acid acumen sharpened Pope's insight and made his character portraits masterpieces of annihilation.

"Chloe" was George II's mistress, the Countess of Suffolk; "Atticus," of course, was Addison; and "Sporus" Lord John Hervey. All three portraits illustrate the way in which Pope was able to make the balanced structure of the heroic couplet give a clarity and control to his utterance that reinforce his accusations. The reader will notice how, in the "Atticus," as in Dryden's Achitophel, the generous tribute adds crushing weight to the censure; and how the sorrowful query of the close—

> Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

—gives depth to the whole. Behind the "Sporus," if the reader search for it, he will feel a more frothing and furious personal malice than in either of the others, but how skillfully Pope carries it off! Almost indolently, he seems brushing away—and if he crush in the process, what matter?—some insignificant but nasty insect, some thing of slime hardly worthy of contempt. By the magic of art Sporus has been caught and preserved in poisoned amber.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

*** The earliest version of the poem, in two cantos, was published in 1712. Pope enlarged it to five cantos, adding the machinery of the sylphs, in 1717. The selections given here represent the greater part of each of *the five successive cantos* ***

Awaking, Belinda Prepares for the Day's Conquests

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing.—This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due,
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view;
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms, dwells such mighty rage?
Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And op'd those eyes that must eclipse the day;
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head,
A youth more glitt'ring than a birth-night beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caused her cheek to glow)
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say.
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!

If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught;
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel-pow'rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below. . . .
Know then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair. . . .
"Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend.
But heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the sylph, oh pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!"
He said, when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours, were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanished from thy head.
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,

And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box,
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billets-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.

The Baron Prays for Victory and Ariel Plans His Defense

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck,
With shining ringlets, the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r adored,
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;

With tender *billets-doux* he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r,
The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay. . . .
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear! . . .
This day, black omens threat the brightest fair
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight,
But what, or where, the fates have wrapped in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
"To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops and armed with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged, whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or alum styptics with contracting pow'r,
Shrink his thin essence like a rivelled flower;
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"

Clarissa's Scissors Do the Fatal Deed

There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste a while the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they passed;
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that. . . .
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instrument of *ill!*
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.

He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair;
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his pow'r expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide
T' inclose the lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again,)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust, and painted fragments lie!

Thalestris Fans the Flames of Belinda's Grief

Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cried,
(While Hampton's echoes "Wretched maid!" replied,)

"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with tort'ring irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare! . . .
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said, then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what the devil!
Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil.
Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapped his box.
"It grieves me much," replied the peer again,
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain,
But by this lock, this sacred lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drowned in tears;
On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised, and thus she said.
"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to num'rous ills betrayed. . . .
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,

Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

The Lock Ascends to Heaven

"Restore the lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
But see how oft' ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees. with heav'n who can contest? . . .
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes·
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view)
A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with disheveled light. . . .
Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

THE CHARACTERS OF WOMEN

*** This is Epistle II of the *Moral Essays* It was composed in 1733, and published in 1735 ***

Chloe, the Impeccable Heartless

"Yet Chloe sure was formed without a spot?"—
Nature in her then erred not, but forgot.
"With every pleasing, every prudent part,
Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never, reached one generous thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in decencies forever.
So very reasonable, so unmoved,
As never yet to love, or to be loved.
She, *while her lover pants upon her breast,*
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
And when she sees her friend in deep despair,
Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair.
Forbid it Heaven a favour or a debt
She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
Safe is your secret still in Chloe's ear,
But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.
Of all her dears she never slandered one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone.
Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her footman put it in her head.
Chloe is prudent—Would you too be wise?
Then never break your heart when Chloe dies.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

⁂ This poem, from which our last two portraits, of "Atticus" and "Sporus," are taken, was published in 1735 ⁂

Atticus, Literary Dictator Terrified of Rivalry

PEACE to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike,
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

Sporus, Glittering Eunuch

POPE. Let Sporus tremble—
ARBUTHNOT. What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
POPE. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er enjoys;
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way,
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the dust.

GULLIVER: THE MAKING OF A MIDDLE-CLASS TIMON



POPE'S SATIRE *poses human nature in silk brocades among all the gilt and artifice of the eighteenth-century drawing room. Swift's satire is timeless. There is none of the décor of his age even in his style, only its clarity. We do not need to know the history or manners of the times to understand him, for he is speaking of all the nations of men, not about individuals or the foibles of any one time or place. No matter if we fail to realize that Flimnap, the Lilliputian Treasurer, is in part a caricature of Sir Robert Walpole, or the Big-Endians and Little-Endians a parody of Roman and Protestant Church struggles; Flimnap is a universal type of all timeserving politicians, and Swift's allegory of doctrinal rancors can be filled in with a thousand illustrations from centuries of religious bitterness. Even the projectors and academies of Lagado are matched by the swarming brood of crank theories and the heartless ingenuity of the scientific imagination. All the follies and horrors of humanity Swift subjects to a flaming satiric Last Judgment hardly less awful than that of Michelangelo*

Gulliver builds upon and often surpasses some of the greatest of Swift's

predecessors. The imaginary voyage, which Lucian had used in light-hearted burlesque of travelers' tales, Swift forges into a weapon of universal destruction. The gigantic invention of Rabelais, Swift elaborates and systematizes. He transforms the Renaissance writer's good-natured giants into Brobdingnagians and makes their large bulk an index to the generosity and magnanimity of their natures; he balances them with the Lilliputians, whose pigmy size reflects the pettiness of theirs. (Swift is unparalleled in the skill with which he can squeeze the last drop of symbolic meaning out of an image or a metaphor.) Swift is also endowed with much of Rabelais' enormous playfulness. That playfulness paints the Lilliputians, for all their more serious purpose in his satire, as a bright-colored little toy people, and flowers in the gay fancies of Lilliputian children playing hide-and-seek in Gulliver's hair and tiny Flemish feasts in which toiling cooks and vintners supply him with whole herds of cows and innumerable hogsheads of ale for a single meal The same playfulness expands to bursting with the Brobdingnagian monkey going through Brobdingnagian monkeyshines and court ladies sportively riding the small Gulliver upon their nipples; indeed, throughout the entire book Swift is ready to follow Rabelais into gross and hilarious farce. But he falls short of Rabelais' cheerful irresponsibility; he is, as Coleridge said, "the soul of Rabelais in a dry place," his proud and angry dust never quite forgetting even at its liveliest the barren and burning sands of his despair.

For beneath his grotesquerie Swift is the saddest and bitterest of all satirists. His theme, like that of Don Quixote, *is the infinite distance between the world as it is and as it ought to be. He is less tender, certainly, and perhaps less philosophically profound than Cervantes. But Swift makes his masterpiece, as the other does not attempt to do, a reasoned catalogue of all the stupidities, vices, and cruelties of mankind. With Shakespeare he has been appalled at the Caliban within men's hearts; his voice is sometimes wild with the hatred of Timon and the cosmic pain of Lear. The* saeva indignatio *he shares with Juvenal is even deeper, for Juvenal's indignation is civic whereas Swift's is human, rooted in a moral ideal for all humanity. Again and again he reiterates it: justice, truth, and love are the foundation stones of every virtue. It is the great affirmative core of his satire, compulsive no matter in how many cruel and insane ways men betray it. And, no pessimist, Swift insisted, as he wrote to Pope, that man was* animal rationis capax, *he could live by these great principles of reason and goodness if he would only strive. Godlike in reach, petty and*

vile in grasp, no wonder the whole pitiful race of man left Swift in horror and despair.

Gulliver *is the funeral pyre of Swift's hopes. And it is a tremendous achievement. The seemingly loose and episodic structure of the four voyages, with their clever aping of Dampier and Defoe's* Crusoe, *is in reality a most tightly knit unity of character and plot. They are almost like the relentless sequence of a Greek trilogy, with the farcical interlude of the voyage to Laputa a misplaced satyr play coming before instead of after the awful close. The first voyage carefully holds to trivia handled in a tone of laughter. The colored silk threads that symbolize Lilliputian ambitions, the creeping and crawling, the adroit tricks of balancing, are comical both in their absurd imagery and in their scale, just as the same ferocity that would be terrifying in a great Dane is merely funny in a little yapping spaniel. And only now and then does Swift allow a mere hint of the darker currents of court jealousy and treachery.*

But in the second voyage the button is off Swift's foil. In the climactic interview with the King of Brobdingnag, Gulliver has extorted from him, despite all his painful and writhing endeavors to withhold or place a better face upon at least a part of the truth, a full confession not merely of the meanness, but the hypocrisy, cruelty, hatred, envy, and malice of mankind. The whole panorama of man's life and institutions passes before us: business, law, education, religion, the classes of society, government, international relations: and all are seen to be deeply corroded with the evil man has chosen. Even Gulliver, when he is desirous of doing the King a favor, can think of nothing better than supplying him with the secret of gunpowder and enabling him to blow his subjects to bits. "I cannot but conclude," says his questioner, with measured justice, "the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

The voyage to Laputa is lighter in key, with its mad inventors trying to extract sunshine from cucumbers and its glancing attack on the inanities of polite conversation, but it suggests how little the welfare of humanity is apt to be advanced by intellect without goodness or wisdom. It is like some fantastic third movement of a symphony before the composer sweeps into the drama and majesty of his finale. And with the Struldbrugs even it has its darker and more melancholy notes to remind us that immortality itself could do the race of men no benefit unless we imagined them, contrary to all probability, to be endowed with an eternity of youth and

intellectual vigor. It leads directly into the last voyage, in which the Houyhnhnms show the rational example humanity has not chosen to follow, and the Yahoos, abysmal and nasty in brutality as they are, nevertheless are still not so degraded as men, who have corrupted the gift of reason and defiled the temple that is within them.

Gulliver himself is the unifying figure who makes this sequence into a progression. How skillfully Swift sketches him in the few pages of the opening: the simple, kindly, prosaic-minded sailor, with his bald notations of his parentage and education and the brief account of his preliminary voyages, so unimaginative that we unconsciously conclude him to be incapable of deception because incapable of the inventive effort of mendacity. He is simply the average man, with all the average man's load of prejudices and delusions. He begins by believing in all the pretensions of humanity. He has the European's belief that Europe represents "civilization"; John Bull's belief that he himself is the culmination of that civilization. He believes his own age the most enlightened and advanced since the beginnings of history. He looks up to his "betters," reveres those supposed to be learned, imagines that judges dispense justice, and regards all his country's wars as righteous and glorious.

But gradually and imperceptibly throughout the whole book, though without any of the display and paraphernalia of psychology that a modern writer would be apt to bring to the same theme, Swift is changing Gulliver's character so that the simple-minded narrator of the first voyage is a very different figure from the middle-class Timon of the end, preferring horses to humanity. (Norman Douglas uses the same device in South Wind, but Bishop Heard is never much more than a figurehead, whereas Gulliver is a human being.) As late as the end of the voyage to Brobdingnag, Gulliver is still struggling to preserve the honor of humanity, trying to conceal if he cannot palliate its pollution. But Swift's pressure is relentless, pushing him and converting him into—what Swift himself was.

And what was Swift? What is the mystery of this dark, despairing personality? Aldous Huxley oversimplifies when he traces all of Swift's misanthropy to his hatred of the bowels, "the poor harmless necessary tripes," and to hatred of groins and genitals and odorous armpits and sweat and excrements. He hated them, certainly, and he bathed in the squelchy imagination of them, stained clouts, smeared chemises, grimy towels, defiled and fascinated at the same time Haunted by the fear of imbecility and a hideous and helpless old age, he tortured himself by painting them both,

again and again, with loving hatred. The victim of Swift's satire, in fact, is Swift himself. The ambitious man, balked in his ambitions, must deride the littleness by which he has been misled. The lover of Stella, who would never allow their love to achieve physical fulfillment, must discipline himself to an iron restraint and confine even his grief for her death to the pitiful words "Only a woman's hair" labeling a lock clipped from her head. He must remind himself that her body, his body, the bodies of all mankind, are decaying masses of ordure as their hearts are dark with pride and corruption. The faithful and tenderhearted friend, the patriot, the benefactor of the poor, the humane defender of Ireland against the greed of English commerce and Irish landlordism, is also the hater of "all nations, professions, and communities" and of the whole race of "that animal called man."

This inward division is the source of Swift's self-laceration and of his satire. Intellectually, what Swift tried to do is clear. "Man in the mass is vile," he sought to tell himself; "only individuals are lovable or good" But emotionally he could not prevent the two propositions from merging. He himself was a man; "John, Peter, Thomas," whom he loved, were men; one cannot be a man without sharing some of the vileness of man. Narrowing down to the individual, in fact, analyzing his own will and heart, he finds the same stains, the same evasions. He must needs, then, hate himself too, hate everyone, hate whom he loved. Seeing truth, honor, and love forever crucified by stupidity and evil, Swift places the blame squarely on men themselves. It is not the way they were made; it is the way they have made themselves. And contemplating them in the mass, he sees small prospect that they will ever be different. He can only conclude, with the Psalmist, that the heart of man is desperately wicked.

The end of Gulliver *is a scream of pain, but it is the pain of a noble and sensitive nature tortured beyond all endurance by the spectacle of evil. In the gaunt, high-roomed exile of his Dublin house, Swift ate out his heart, performed his austerities, made his grim charities, saw visitors, raged, jested, heard the noises within his head, felt the approaching vertigo and the gray mists of insanity. But it was not madness that created that hideous vision of the world. Perhaps it is only the normal madness of men that prevents them from constantly seeing it so. But no tender self-complacence or kindly hallucination obscured the bitter clarity of Swift's vision. Finally, in his seventies, madness did come, and he sank down into darkness howling.*

TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL
REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD
BY LEMUEL GULLIVER

*** *Gulliver* was first published in 1726, and for some time thereafter Swift kept up the hoax of it being by its supposed "author" ***

The Politicians of Lilliput Demonstrate Their Statesmanship

MY GENTLENESS and good behaviour had gained so far on the Emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I began to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favourable disposition. The natives came by degrees to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand. And at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide and seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments, and high favour, at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common

packthread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal Secretary for private Affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green. These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favour. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-coloured silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court, who are not adorned with one of these girdles.

The King of Brobdingnag Gets a View of European Civilization

The King, who, as I before observed, was a prince of excellent understanding, would frequently order that I should be brought in my box, and set upon the table in his closet. He would then command me to bring one of my chairs out of the box, and sit down within three yards distance upon the top of the cabinet, which brought me almost to a level with his face. In

this manner I had several conversations with him. I one day took the freedom to tell his Majesty, that the contempt he discovered towards Europe, and the rest of the world, did not seem answerable to those excellent qualities of the mind he was master of. That reason did not extend itself with the bulk of the body: on the contrary, we observed in our country, that the tallest persons were usually least provided with it. That among other animals, bees and ants had the reputation of more industry, art and sagacity, than many of the larger kinds. And that, as inconsiderable as he took me to be, I hoped I might live to do his Majesty some signal service. The King heard me with attention, and began to conceive a much better opinion of me than he had ever before. He desired I would give him as exact an account of the government of England as I possibly could; because, as fond as princes commonly are of their own customs (for so he conjectured of other monarchs, by my former discourses), he should be glad to hear of any thing that might deserve imitation.

Imagine with thyself, courteous reader, how often I then wished for the tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero, that might have enabled me to celebrate the praise of my own dear native country in a style equal to its merits and felicity.

I began my discourse by informing his Majesty, that our dominions consisted of two islands, which composed three mighty kingdoms under one sovereign, beside our plantations in America. I dwelt long upon the fertility of our soil, and the temperature of our climate. I then spoke at large upon the constitution of an English Parliament, partly made up of an illustrious body called the House of Peers, persons of the noblest blood, and of the most ancient and ample patrimonies. I described that extraordinary care always taken of their education in arts and arms, to qualify them for being counsellors born to the king and kingdom; to have a share in the legislature; to be members of the highest Court of Judicature, from whence there could be no appeal; and to be champions always ready for the defence of their prince and country, by their valour, conduct, and fidelity. That these were the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom, worthy followers of their most renowned ancestors, whose honour had been the reward of their virtue, from which their posterity were never once known to degenerate. To these were joined several holy persons, as part of that assembly, under the title of Bishops, whose peculiar business it is to take care of religion, and of those who instruct the people therein. These were searched and sought out through the whole nation, by the prince and his wisest counsellors, among such of the priesthood as were most deservedly distinguished by the sanctity of their lives, and the depth of their erudition; who were indeed the spiritual fathers of the clergy and the people.

That the other part of the Parliament consisted of an assembly called the House of Commons, who were all principal gentlemen, freely picked and culled out by the people themselves, for their great abilities and love of their country, to represent the wisdom of the whole nation. And these two bodies make up the most august assembly in Europe, to whom, in conjunction with the prince, the whole legislature is committed. -

I then descended to the Courts of Justice, over which the Judges, those venerable sages and interpreters of the law, presided, for determining the disputed rights and properties of men, as well as for the punishment of vice, and protection of innocence. I mentioned the prudent management of our treasury; the valour and achievements of our forces by sea and land. I computed the number of our people, by reckoning how many millions there might be of each religious sect, or political party among us. I did not omit even our sports and pastimes, or any other particular which I thought might redound to the honour of my country. And I finished all with a brief historical account of affairs and events in England for about an hundred years past.

This conversation was not ended under five audiences, each of several hours, and the King heard the whole with great attention, frequently taking notes of what I spoke, as well as memorandums of what questions he intended to ask me.

When I had put an end to these long discourses, his Majesty in a sixth audience consulting his notes, proposed many doubts, queries, and objections, upon every article. He asked what methods were used to cultivate the minds and bodies of our young nobility, and in what kind of business they commonly spent the first and teachable part of their lives. What course was taken to supply that assembly when any noble family became extinct. What qualifications were necessary in those who are to be created new lords: whether the humour of the prince, a sum of money to a court lady, or a prime minister, or a design of strengthening a party opposite to the public interest, ever happened to be motives in those advancements. What share of knowledge these lords had in the laws of their country, and how they came by it, so as to enable them to decide the properties of their fellow-subjects in the last resort. Whether they were always so free from avarice, partialities, or want, that a bribe, or some other sinister view, could have no place among them. Whether those holy lords I spoke of were always promoted to that rank upon account of their knowledge in religious matters, and the sanctity of their lives, had never been compliers with the times, while they were common priests, or slavish prostitute chaplains to some nobleman, whose opinions they continued servilely to follow after they were admitted into that assembly.

He then desired to know what arts were practised in electing those whom I called commoners: whether a stranger with a strong purse might not influence the vulgar voters to choose him before their own landlord, or the most considerable gentleman in the neighbourhood. How it came to pass, that people were so violently bent upon getting into this assembly, which I allowed to be a great trouble and expense, often to the ruin of their families, without any salary or pension: because this appeared such an exalted strain of virtue and public spirit, that his Majesty seemed to doubt it might possibly not be always sincere: and he desired to know whether such zealous gentlemen could have any views of refunding themselves for the charges and trouble they were at, by sacrificing the public good to the designs of a weak and vicious prince in conjunction with a corrupted ministry. He multiplied his questions, and sifted me thoroughly upon every part of this head, proposing numberless enquiries and objections, which I think it not prudent or convenient to repeat.

Upon what I said in relation to our Courts of Justice, his Majesty desired to be satisfied in several points: and this I was better able to do, having been formerly almost ruined by a long suit in chancery, which was decreed for me with costs. He asked, what time was usually spent in determining between right and wrong, and what degree of expense. Whether advocates and orators had liberty to plead in causes manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious, or oppressive. Whether party in religion or politics were observed to be of any weight in the scale of justice. Whether those pleading orators were persons educated in the general knowledge of equity, or only in provincial, national, and other local customs. Whether they or their judges had any part in penning those laws which they assumed the liberty of interpreting and glossing upon at their pleasure. Whether they had ever at different times pleaded for and against the same cause, and cited precedents to prove contrary opinions. Whether they received any pecuniary reward for pleading or delivering their opinions. And particularly, whether they were ever admitted as members in the lower senate.

He fell next upon the management of our treasury; and said, he thought my memory had failed me, because I computed our taxes at about five or six millions a year, and when I came to mention the issues, he found they sometimes amounted to more than double; for the notes he had taken were very particular on this point, because he hoped, as he told me, that the knowledge of our conduct might be useful to him, and he could not be deceived in his calculations. But, if what I told him were true, he was still at a loss how a kingdom could run out of its estate like a private person. He asked me, who were our creditors; and where we should find money to pay them. He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and expensive wars;

that certainly we must be a quarrelsome people, or live among very bad neighbours, and that our generals must needs be richer than our kings. He asked what business we had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade or treaty, or to defend the coasts with our fleet. Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing army in the midst of peace, and among a free people. He said, if we were governed by our own consent in the persons of our representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid, or against whom we were to fight; and would hear my opinion, whether a private man's house might not better be defended by himself, his children, and family, than by half a dozen rascals picked up at a venture in the streets, for small wages, who might get an hundred times more by cutting their throats.

He laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic (as he was pleased to call it) in reckoning the numbers of our people by a computation drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said, he knew no reason, why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public, should be obliged to change, or should not be obliged to conceal them. And as it was tyranny in any government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second: for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials.

He observed, that among the diversions of our nobility and gentry, I had mentioned gaming. He desired to know at what age this entertainment was usually taken up, and when it was laid down; how much of their time it employed; whether it ever went so high as to affect their fortunes; whether mean vicious people, by their dexterity in that art, might not arrive at great riches, and sometimes keep our very nobles in dependence, as well as habituate them to vile companions, wholly take them from the improvement of their minds, and force them, by the losses they have received, to learn and practise that infamous dexterity upon others.

He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century, protesting it was only an heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments, the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition, could produce.

His Majesty, in another audience, was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken; compared the questions he made with the answers I had given; then taking me into his hands, and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words, which I shall never forget, nor the manner he spoke them in: "My little friend Grildrig, you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice, are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator: that laws are

best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interest and abilities lies in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution, which in its original might have been tolerable, but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It doth not appear from all you have said, how any one virtue is required towards the procurement of any one station among you; much less that men are ennobled on account of their virtue, that priests are advanced for their piety or learning, soldiers for their conduct or valour, judges for their integrity, senators for the love of their country, or counsellors for their wisdom. As for yourself," continued the King, "who have spent the greatest part of your life in travelling, I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country. But by what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

Nothing but an extreme love of truth could have hindered me from concealing this part of my story. It was in vain to discover my resentments, which were always turned into ridicule; and I was forced to rest with patience while my noble and most beloved country was so injuriously treated I am heartily sorry as any of my readers can possibly be, that such an occasion was given: but this prince happened to be so curious and inquisitive upon every particular, that it could not consist either with gratitude or good manners to refuse giving him what satisfaction I was able. Yet thus much I may be allowed to say in my own vindication, that I artfully eluded many of his questions, and gave to every point a more favourable turn by many degrees than the strictness of truth would allow. For I have always borne that laudable partiality to my own country, which Dionysius Halicarnassensis with so much justice recommends to an historian· I would hide the frailties and deformities of my political mother, and place her virtues and beauties in the most advantageous light. This was my sincere endeavour in those many discourses I had with that mighty monarch, although it unfortunately failed of success.

The Houyhnhnms Learn About War; Gulliver's Homecoming

The reader may please to observe, that the following extract of many conversations I had with my master, contains a summary of the most material points, which were discoursed at several times for above two years; his Honour often desiring fuller satisfaction as I farther improved in the *Houyhnhnm* tongue. I laid before him, as well as I could, the whole state of Europe; I discoursed of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences; and the answers I gave to all the questions he made, as they arose upon several subjects, were a fund of conversation not to be exhausted. But I shall here only set down the substance of what passed between us concerning my own country, reducing it into order as well as I can, without any regard to time or other circumstances, while I strictly adhere to truth. . . .

He asked me what were the usual causes or motives that made one country go to war with another. I answered they were innumerable; but I should only mention a few of the chief. Sometimes the ambition of princes, who never think they have land or people enough to govern; sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their master in a war in order to stifle or divert the clamour of the subjects against their evil administration. Difference in opinions hath cost many millions of lives: for instance, whether flesh be bread, or bread be flesh; whether the juice of a certain berry be blood or wine; whether whistling be a vice or a virtue; whether it be better to kiss a post, or throw it into the fire; what is the best colour for a coat, whether black, white, red, or gray; and whether it should be long or short, narrow or wide, dirty or clean; with many more. Neither are any wars so furious and bloody, or of so long continuance, as those occasioned by difference in opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.

"What you have told me," said my master, "upon the subject of war, does indeed discover most admirably the effects of that reason you pretend to: however, it is happy that the shame is greater than the danger; and that nature hath left you utterly uncapable of doing much mischief.

"For your mouths lying flat with your faces, you can hardly bite each other to any purpose, unless by consent. Then as to the claws upon your feet before and behind, they are so short and tender, that one of our *Yahoos* would drive a dozen of yours before him. And therefore in recounting the numbers of those who have been killed in battle, I cannot but think that you have *said the thing which is not.*"

I could not forbear shaking my head, and smiling a little at his ignorance. And being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea fights; ships sunk with a thousand men, twenty thousand killed on each side; dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet; flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewed with carcases left for food to dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning and destroying. And to set forth the valour of my own dear countrymen, I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship, and beheld the dead bodies come down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators.

I was going on to more particulars, when my master commanded me silence. He said, whoever understood the nature of *Yahoos* might easily believe it possible for so vile an animal, to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning equalled their malice. But as my discourse had increased his abhorrence of the whole species, so he found it gave him a disturbance in his mind, to which he was wholly a stranger before. He thought his ears being used to such abominable words, might by degrees admit them with less detestation. That although he hated the *Yahoos* of this country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious qualities, than he did a *gnnayh* (a bird of prey) for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof. But when a creature pretending to reason, could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident, that instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices, as the reflection from a troubled stream returns the image of an ill-shapen body, not only larger, but more distorted.

[*The Houyhnhnms having decided that Gulliver may not be allowed to remain with them, he is put to sea on a canoe, picked up by a Portuguese vessel, and conveyed back to England.*]

My wife and family received me with great surprise and joy, because they concluded me certainly dead, but I must freely confess the sight of them filled me only with hatred, disgust, and contempt, and the more by reflecting on the near alliance I had to them. For, although since my unfortunate exile from the *Houyhnhnm* country, I had compelled myself to tolerate the sight of *Yahoos*, and to converse with Don Pedro de Mendez, yet my memory and imagination were perpetually filled with the virtues

and ideas of those exalted *Houyhnhnms*. And when I began to consider, that by copulating with one of the *Yahoo* species I had become a parent of more, it struck me with the utmost shame, confusion, and horror.

As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms, and kissed me; at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell in a swoon for almost an hour. At the time I am writing it is five years since my last return to England: during the first year, I could not endure my wife or children in my presence, the very smell of them was intolerable; much less could I suffer them to eat in the same room. To this hour they dare not presume to touch my bread, or drink out of the same cup, neither was I ever able to let one of them take me by the hand....

I began last week to permit my wife to sit at dinner with me, at the farthest end of a long table, and to answer (but with the utmost brevity) the few questions I asked her. Yet the smell of a *Yahoo* continuing very offensive, I always keep my nose well stopped with rue, lavender, or tobacco leaves. And although it be hard for a man late in life to remove old habits, I am not altogether out of hopes in some time to suffer a neighbour *Yahoo* in my company, without the apprehensions I am yet under of his teeth or his claws.

My reconcilement to the *Yahoo*-kind in general might not be so difficult, if they would be content with those vices and follies only which nature hath entitled them to. I am not in the least provoked at the sight of a lawyer, a pick-pocket, a colonel, a fool, a lord, a gamester, a politician, a whoremaster, a physician, an evidence, a suborner, an attorney, a traitor, or the like, this is all according to the due course of things: but when I behold a lump of deformity, and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with *pride*, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience; neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an animal and such a vice could tally together.

JOHN GAY DEVISES A NOVEL FORM OF PASTORAL



THE BEGGAR'S OPERA was inspired by a facetious remark of Swift's about what a pretty oddity "a Newgate Pastoral" might be. Originally the pastoral lyric had simple folk like shepherds expressing deep feeling in learned and elevated language. It combined the desire to write in the most beautiful way with the sentiment that the country dweller is somehow close to nature, profoundly in touch with the sources of existence. Thereby it fused the virtues of nature and art; the poet mirrored in himself both the complexity and artifice of his own world and the dignity of a life rooted in fundamental things. By reminding us, furthermore, that the shepherd is a guardian of his flock, the poet could suggest analogies with rulers and their people, pastors and their congregations, and make his rural scene a symbol of all society and the whole world.

When the pastoral is used for satire, the shepherd becomes a variant on the ironic device of the "pure fool." Standing outside of sophisticated society and naively voicing his wonder or bewilderment at its ways, he seems at first to be exposing only his own ignorance and simplicity, but gradually his words drip doubts into our minds about whether the conventions we have taken for granted are really "natural" and "good." Or, conversely, when he voices our sentiments, but does so in a background

of sheepfolds and crooks, the incongruity reveals how merely specious are these ideas that seemed well enough in more familiar surroundings. He is an ambiguous figure who both criticizes and exemplifies a world that he lights up from queerly shifting angles.

Strephon and Corydon appear seldom in modern poetry, and even less often in our satire (though Gilbert uses a Strephon in Iolanthe). But giving up the obvious pastoral only made it necessary for satirists to invent new figures to serve the same function. The Oriental visitor of Montesquieu and Goldsmith, various interplanetary travelers from Voltaire's Micromégas to the present, time travelers like H. G. Wells's "Sleeper" who wakes up in the twenty-first century; Noble Savages and Natural Men, Peacock's Sir Oran Haut-Ton, the Independent Farmer contrasted with the city slickers in Mrs. Mowat's Fashion; clowns, simpletons, and saints, like those in Penguin Island; children looking on the adult world, like Carroll's Alice and Mark Twain's Huck Finn, or childlike persons, such as Lorelei, in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes—all these are merely different versions of the simple outsider as satiric touchstone.

Miss Loos's heroine also falls into another category of the pastoral convention, the human being alienated from and preying upon society, whose values cut across it because he is at odds with the world. This is the version of pastoral that The Beggar's Opera so brilliantly represents All the characters are upon the shady edges of society. Macheath, a highwayman; Filch, a pickpocket; Peachum, a receiver of stolen goods, Lockit, a turnkey, in cahoots with Peachum; most of the women, prostitutes. Their behavior and their principles are equally revealing whether these agree with those of everyday convention or are on the bias to them. "Poor lad!" exclaims Mrs. Peachum, "How little does he know as yet of the Old Bailey!" just as a respectable matron might say "of life." How this suddenly lights up our minds with the vision of a way of existing to which life and jail are almost synonymous. And when Mr. and Mrs. Peachum are in a great passion to learn whether Polly has been so ill-advised as to marry, Peachum shouts, in the manner of a father fearing his daughter has been seduced, "Tell me, Hussy, are you ruined or no?"

But if the judgments of this criminal world are different from ours, they are also paradoxically the same. "The greatest heroes," Peachum tells Macheath after his doxies have betrayed him to the constables, "have been ruined by women." "Throughout the whole piece," says the Beggar who presents the play, "you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life, that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable

vices) the fine Gentlemen imitate the Gentlemen of the Road, or the Gentlemen of the Road the fine Gentlemen." The hussies who swarm around Macheath and surreptitiously remove his pistols while they stop his mouth with kisses perform their treachery with an elegant languor of good breeding. The sharpness of the analogy bites still deeper when Mrs. Peachum criticizes Macheath: "What business hath he to keep company with lords and gentlemen? he should leave them to prey upon one another."

The entire play, in fact, from one angle, is nothing but an unmasking of the governing classes as a gang of marauders putting a pistol to the public's head, with government simply the method of conducting the holdup. Macheath was recognized to be a burlesque on the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, who was also mentioned in the dialogue under the name of Bob Booty. And it will be noted that although Macheath has the most spectacular and dangerous role, he is really nothing more than a tool of Peachum, the receiver of stolen goods, who takes most of the profits and none of the risks, and protects himself by turning his puppets over to the law whenever they grow useless or threatening The statesmen, Gay is adroitly saying, are only the instruments of commercial corruption and vested interests, represented by the Peachums, who get rid of their minions when they have outlived their usefulness.

All these things Gay puts good-humoredly enough, though with unmistakable clarity. He has no strong animus against Macheath, indeed handles him rather sympathetically, giving something almost like glamour to his foible for good manners and behaving like a gentleman If the piece has a villain, or any character Gay himself dislikes, it is Peachum, a symbol for the commercial-industrial middle class whom Art Young would have enjoyed inventing. But even Peachum is allowed to defend himself in the genial language of materialistic morality· he has to take his profits and cut his losses, and if he didn't do it somebody else would. Throughout the whole action of this "Newgate Pastoral" Gay exploits the full possibilities of his pastoral convention with a liveliness of wit that positively dances, playing every variation on attack and ironic defense. Now Macheath and Peachum are speaking for the aristocracy and upper middle class; now their very words of justification let the bottom drop out of the case they seem to put, and give away the show instead, and now still another transformation turns them back into criminals again, with a novel but quite logical code of their own, that throws into an entirely new light the codes of respectable society. It is a comic ballet of perspectives by incongruity.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

The Beggar's Opera was first performed in 1728. The scenes given here are from Act I, Scenes 4 through 8

Peachum and His Wife Learn the Worst About Their Daughter

The scene is in Peachum's house
Peachum at his account book, talking with Mrs. Peachum

PEACHUM. Was Captain Macheath here this Morning, for the Bank-notes he left with you last Week?

MRS. PEACHUM. Yes, my Dear; and though the Bank hath stopt Payment, he was so cheerful and so agreeable! Sure there is not a finer Gentleman upon the Road than the Captain! If he comes from Bagshot at any reasonable Hour he hath promis'd to make one this Evening with Polly and me, and Bob Booty, at a Party of Quadrille. Pray, my Dear, is the Captain rich?

PEACHUM. The Captain keeps too good Company ever to grow rich. Marybone and the Chocolate-houses are his undoing. The Man that proposes to get Money by Play should have the Education of a fine Gentleman, and be train'd up to it from his Youth.

MRS. PEACHUM. Really, I am sorry upon Polly's Account the Captain hath not more Discretion. What business hath he to keep Company with Lords and Gentlemen? he should leave them to prey upon one another.

PEACHUM. Upon Polly's Account! What, a Plague, does the Woman mean? —Upon Polly's Account!

MRS. PEACHUM. Captain Macheath is very fond of the Girl.

PEACHUM. And what then?

MRS. PEACHUM. If I have any Skill in the Ways of Women, I am sure Polly thinks him a very pretty Man.

PEACHUM. And what then? You would not be so mad to have the Wench marry him! Gamesters and Highwaymen are generally very good to their Whores, but they are very Devils to their Wives.

MRS. PEACHUM. But if Polly should be in love, how should we help her, or how can she help herself? Poor Girl, I am in the utmost Concern about her.

AIR IV. WHY IS YOUR FAITHFUL SLAVE DISDAIN'D? &C.

If Love the Virgin's Heart invade,
How, like a Moth, the simple Maid
Still plays about the Flame!
If soon she be not made a Wife,
Her Honour's sing'd, and then for Life,
She's—what I dare not name.

PEACHUM. Look ye, Wife. A handsome Wench in our way of Business is as profitable as at the Bar of a Temple Coffee-House, who looks upon it as her livelihood to grant every Liberty but one. You see I would indulge the Girl as far as prudently we can. In any thing, but Marriage! After that, my Dear, how shall we be safe? Are we not then in her Husband's Power? For a Husband hath the absolute Power over all a Wife's Secrets but her own. If the Girl had the Discretion of a Court Lady, who can have a dozen young Fellows at her Ear without complying with one, I should not matter it; but Polly is Tinder, and a Spark will at once set her on a Flame. Married! If the Wench does not know her own Profit, sure she knows her own Pleasure better than to make herself a Property! My Daughter to me should be, like a Court Lady to a Minister of State, a Key to the whole Gang. Married! If the Affair is not already done, I'll terrify her from it, by the Example of our Neighbours.

MRS. PEACHUM. May-hap, my Dear, you may injure the Girl. She loves to imitate the fine Ladies, and she may only allow the Captain Liberties in the View of Interest.

PEACHUM. But 'tis your Duty, my Dear, to warn the Girl against her Ruin, and to instruct her how to make the most of her Beauty. I'll go to her this moment, and sift her. In the meantime, Wife, rip out the Coronets and Marks of these dozen of Cambric Handkerchiefs, for I can dispose of them this Afternoon to a Chap in the City. *Exit Peachum*

MRS. PEACHUM. Never was a man more out of the way in an Argument than my Husband! Why must our Polly, forsooth, differ from her Sex, and love only her Husband? And why must Polly's Marriage, contrary to all Observation, make her the less followed by other Men? All Men are Thieves in Love, and like a Woman the better for being another's Property.

AIR V. OF ALL THE SIMPLE THINGS WE DO, &C.

A Maid is like the golden Oar,
Which hath Guineas intrinsical in't,
Whose Worth is never known, before
It is try'd and imprest in the Mint.

A Wife's like a Guinea in Gold,
Stampt with the Name of her Spouse,
Now here, now there; is bought, or is sold;
And is current in every House.

Enter Filch

MRS. PEACHUM. Come hither, Filch. I am as fond of this Child, as though my Mind misgave me he were my own. He hath as fine a Hand at picking a Pocket as a Woman, and is as nimble-finger'd as a Juggler. If an unlucky Session does not cut the Rope of thy Life, I pronounce, Boy, thou wilt be a great Man in History. Where was your Post last Night, my Boy?

FILCH. I ply'd at the Opera, Madam; and considering 'twas neither dark nor rainy, so that there was no great Hurry in getting Chairs and Coaches, made a tolerable hand on't. These seven Handkerchiefs, Madam.

MRS. PEACHUM. Colour'd ones, I see. They are of sure Sale from our Warehouse at Redress among the Seamen.

FILCH. And this Snuff-box.

MRS. PEACHUM. Set in Gold! A pretty Encouragement this to a young Beginner.

FILCH. I had a fair tug at a charming Gold Watch Pox take the Taylors for making the Fobs so deep and narrow! It stuck by the way, and I was forc'd to make my Escape under a Coach. Really, Madam, I fear I shall be cut off in the Flower of my Youth, so that every now and then (since I was pumpt) I have thoughts of taking up and going to Sea.

MRS. PEACHUM. You should go to Hockley in the Hole, and to Marybone, Child, to learn Valour. These are the Schools that have bred so many brave Men. I thought, Boy, by this time, thou hadst lost Fear as well as Shame. Poor Lad! how little does he know as yet of the Old-Bailey! For the first Fact I'll insure thee from being hang'd, and going to Sea, Filch, will come time enough upon a Sentence of Transportation. But now, since you have nothing better to do, ev'n go to your Book, and learn your Catechism; for really a Man makes but an ill Figure in the Ordinary's Paper, who cannot give a satisfactory Answer to his Questions. But,

hark you, my lad. Don't tell me a Lye; for you know I hate a Lyar. Do you know of any thing that hath past between Captain Macheath and our Polly?

FILCH. I beg you, Madam, don't ask me; for I must either tell a Lye to you or to Miss Polly; for I promis'd her I would not tell.

MRS. PEACHUM. But when the Honour of our Family is concern'd—

FILCH. I shall lead a sad Life with Miss Polly, if ever she come to know that I told you. Besides, I would not willingly forfeit my own Honour by betraying any body.

MRS. PEACHUM. Yonder comes my Husband and Polly. Come, Filch, you shall go with me into my own Room, and tell me the whole Story. I'll give thee a most delicious Glass of a Cordial that I keep for my own drinking. *Exeunt Mrs. Peachum and Filch; enter Peachum and Polly*

POLLY. I know as well as any of the fine Ladies how to make the most of my self and of my Man too. A Woman knows how to be mercenary, though she hath never been in a Court or at an Assembly. We have it in our Natures, Papa. If I allow Captain Macheath some trifling Liberties, I have this Watch and other visible Marks of his Favour to show for it. A Girl who cannot grant some Things, and refuse what is most material, will make but a poor hand of her Beauty, and soon be thrown upon the Common.

AIR VI. WHAT SHALL I DO TO SHOW HOW MUCH I LOVE HER, &C.

Virgins are like the fair Flower in its Lustre,
Which in the Garden enamels the Ground;
Near it the Bees in Play flutter and cluster,
And gaudy Butterflies frolick around.
But, when once pluck'd, 'tis no longer alluring,
To Covent-Garden 'tis sent, (as yet sweet,)
There fades, and shrinks, and grows past all enduring,
Rots, stinks, and dies, and is trod under feet.

PEACHUM. You know, Polly, I am not against your toying and trifling with a Customer in the way of Business, or to get out a Secret, or so. But if I find out that you have play'd the fool and are married, you Jade you, I'll cut your Throat, Hussy. Now you know my Mind.

AIR VII. OH LONDON IS A FINE TOWN

Enter Mrs. Peachum, in a very great Passion

Our Polly is a sad Slut! nor heeds what we taught her.
I wonder any Man alive will ever rear a Daughter!
For she must have both Hoods and Gowns, and Hoops to swell her Pride.
With Scarfs and Stays, and Gloves and Lace; and she will have Men beside;
And when she's drest with Care and Cost, all-tempting, fine and gay,
As Men should serve a Cowcumber, she flings herself away.
Our Polly is a sad Slut, &c.

MRS. PEACHUM. You Baggage! you Hussy! you inconsiderate Jade! had you been hang'd, it would not have vex'd me, for that might have been your Misfortune; but to do such a mad thing by Choice! The Wench is married, Husband.

PEACHUM. Married! The Captain is a bold man, and will risque any thing for Money; to be sure he believes her a Fortune. Do you think your Mother and I should have liv'd comfortably so long together, if ever we had been married? Baggage!

MRS. PEACHUM. I knew she was always a proud Slut; and now the Wench hath play'd the Fool and married, because forsooth she should do like the Gentry. Can you support the expense of a Husband, Hussy, in gaming, drinking and whoring? have you Money enough to carry on the daily Quarrels of Man and Wife about who shall squander most? There are not many Husbands and Wives, who can bear the Charges of plaguing one another in a handsome way. If you must be married, could you introduce nobody into our Family but a Highwayman? Why, thou foolish Jade, thou wilt be as ill-us'd, and as much neglected, as if thou hadst married a Lord!

PEACHUM. Let not your Anger, my Dear, break through the Rules of Decency, for the Captain looks upon himself in the Military Capacity, as a Gentleman by his Profession. Besides what he hath already, I know he is in a fair way of getting, or of dying; and both these ways, let me tell you, are most excellent Chances for a Wife. Tell me, Hussy, are you ruin'd or no?

MRS. PEACHUM. With Polly's Fortune, she might very well have gone off to a Person of Distinction. Yes, that you might, you pouting Slut!

PEACHUM. What, is the Wench dumb? Speak, or I'll make you plead by squeezing out an Answer from you. Are you really bound Wife to him, or are you only upon liking? *Pinches her*

POLLY. Oh! *Screaming*

MRS. PEACHUM. How the Mother is to be pitied who hath handsome Daughters! Locks, Bolts, Bars, and Lectures of Morality are nothing to them: They break through them all. They have as much Pleasure in cheating a Father and Mother, as in cheating at Cards.

PEACHUM. Why, Polly, I shall soon know if you are married, by Macheath's keeping from our House.

AIR VIII. GRIM KING OF THE GHOSTS, &C.

POLLY.

Can Love be controul'd by Advice?
  Will Cupid our Mothers obey?
Though my Heart were as frozen as Ice,
  At his Flame 'twould have melted away.

When he kist me so closely he prest,
  'Twas so sweet that I must have comply'd:
So I thought it both safest and best
  To marry, for fear you should chide.

MRS. PEACHUM. Then all the Hopes of our Family are gone for ever and ever!

PEACHUM. And Macheath may hang his Father and Mother-in-Law, in hope to get into their Daughter's Fortune.

POLLY. I did not marry him (as 'tis the Fashion) coolly and deliberately for Honour or Money. But, I love him.

MRS. PEACHUM. Love him! worse and worse! I thought the Girl had been better bred. Oh Husband, Husband! her Folly makes me mad! my Head swims! I'm distracted! I can't support myself—Oh! *Faints*

PEACHUM. See, Wench, to what a Condition you have reduc'd your poor Mother! a Glass of Cordial, this instant. How the poor Woman takes it to Heart! *Polly goes out, and returns with it*

Ah, Hussy, now this is the only Comfort your Mother has left!

POLLY. Give her another Glass, Sir; my Mama drinks double the Quantity whenever she is out of Order. This, you see, fetches her.

MRS. PEACHUM. The Girl shows such a Readiness, and so much Concern, that I could almost find in my Heart to forgive her.

AIR IX. O JENNY, O JENNY, WHERE HAST THOU BEEN

O Polly, you might have toy'd and kist.
By keeping Men off, you keep them on.
POLLY. But he so teaz'd me,
And he so pleas'd me,
What I did, you must have done.

MRS. PEACHUM. Not with a Highwayman.–You sorry Slut!

PEACHUM. A Word with you, Wife. 'Tis no new thing for a Wench to take Man without consent of Parents. You know 'tis the Frailty of Woman, my Dear.

MRS. PEACHUM. Yes, indeed, the Sex is frail. But the first time a Woman is frail, she should be somewhat nice methinks, for then or never is the time to make her Fortune. After that, she hath nothing to do but to guard herself from being found out, and she may do what she pleases.

PEACHUM. Make your self a little easy; I have a Thought shall soon set all Matters again to rights. Why so melancholy, Polly? since what is done cannot be undone, we must all endeavour to make the best of it.

MRS. PEACHUM. Well, Polly, as far as one Woman can forgive another, I forgive thee.–Your Father is too fond of you, Hussy.

POLLY. Then all my Sorrows are at an end.

MRS. PEACHUM. A mighty likely Speech in troth, for a Wench who is just married!

THE MELANCHOLY WIT OF SAMUEL JOHNSON



MACAULAY'S violently colored essay has given currency to the paradox that Johnson is deservedly forgotten for the writings he imagined would preserve his memory and remembered only for the conversation he thought would die with him. In reality, much of Johnson's work merits praise. His essays, for all their elaborateness of diction, are full of robust independence and knowledge of the world. The Lives of the Poets *are vigorous and clear cut in style, full of lively anecdote, brilliant character portrayal, and penetrating literary judgments. Johnson's Shakespearean criticism is wise, just, and revealing beyond that of more than a very few other commentators.*

Had Macaulay been writing of Johnson as a satirist, however, his words would have been more nearly true. In the heat of controversy, Johnson's contentiousness was stimulated, his strength and mental agility came into play. All the weapons of the satirist reached themselves joyfully into his grasp: derision, irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, analogy, knockdown abuse. "I can provide you with an argument, Sir," he told an opponent who had said he couldn't understand Johnson's point; "but I cannot provide you

with an understanding" To a gentleman who had been annoying him with sentimental Rousseauistic effusions about roaming the wilderness with a gun and an Indian woman for his bride: "What more could be desired for human happiness?"—Johnson burst out, "This is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak he might as well exclaim, 'Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being could enjoy greater felicity?'"

But alone by himself, Johnson's thoughts became gloomy, and when he reflected on human life and fate he fell into the melancholy didacticism that makes Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia *so different from the satiric horseplay of Voltaire's* Candide, *though the two resemble each other so closely in thought. Rasselas escaping from the Happy Valley is like Candide leaving El Dorado, and the miseries he finds in the outer world, though more abstractly portrayed, are no less overwhelming than those Candide experiences in person. But Johnson's sad expository force merely demonstrates what Voltaire makes into a hilarious dance of destruction.*

Fired by personal indignation, Johnson could sharpen the barbed sentences of his letter to Chesterfield. More abstract evils, though, leave him only heavyhearted; his Vanity of Human Wishes, *professedly an imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire, echoes the weariness of Ecclesiastes rather than the fury of Juvenal. And the reader may mark for himself the differences between Johnson's* London *and Juvenal's* Third Satire, *whose form and sequence of ideas it follows.*

Johnson is wittier than Juvenal. His "fool in half his pension dressed" is a cleverer turn of phrase than anything Juvenal engineers, and his illustration of the eager servility of the French Monsieur, "Bid him go to hell, to hell he goes," more ludicrous in its leap from metaphorical command to literal obedience than anything Juvenal says to prove the sycophancy of the Greeks. In his opening description of the horrors of urban life—

> *Here falling houses thunder on your head,*
> *And here a female atheist talks you dead—*

the very juxtaposition is comic.

Throughout all his poem, Johnson is ingenious in finding analogies to his Latin original. Greece and Syria become Paris and Rome, the supple Frenchman bowing and scraping the equivalent of the wily Greek. But the whole tone of Johnson's denunciation is much milder. He does not feel in fact that French ways have gained any such disastrous hold in England as Juvenal felt Greece had done in Rome. The extremes of luxury and want

he observes and condemns, but without Juvenal's horror and violence. The truth is that Juvenal's hatred of urban life was real, but Johnson's only a literary convention. "When a man is tired of London," he once said, "he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." Johnson could write with conviction of the miseries that afflicted all existence, he did not really feel that they were worse but rather that they were less onerously felt in London than elsewhere. That is why the Third Satire is an overflow of volcanic passion, and London *a clever and polished work of wit.*

LONDON:
A POEM IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE OF JUVENAL

««« This poem was published in 1738 »»»

Thales Finds Fault with Life in England's Capital

—Quis iniquae
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?
—*Juv.* I. 30, I.
(Who so patient of the unjust town, so unfeeling
as to restrain himself?)

Though grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injured Thales bids the town farewell,
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend,
(I praise the hermit, but regret the friend,)
Who now resolves, from vice and London far,
To breathe in distant fields a purer air;
For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land,
Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
There none are swept by sudden fate away,
But all, whom hunger spares, with age decay:
Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
And now a rabble rages, now a fire;
Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay,
And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
Here falling houses thunder on your head,
And here a female atheist talks you dead.
While Thales waits the wherry that contains
Of dissipated wealth the small remains,
On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood;
Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth;
In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew,
And call Britannia's glories back to view;

Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
The guard of Commerce and the dread of Spain,
Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,
Or English honour grew a standing jest.
  A transient calm the happy scenes bestow,
And for a moment lull the sense of woe.
At length awaking, with contemptuous frown
Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town.
  "Since worth," he cries, "in these degen'rate days,
Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise;
In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science toils in vain;
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,
And ev'ry moment leaves my little less;
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,
And life still vig'rous revels in my veins,
Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier place,
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
Some peaceful vale with Nature's paintings gay,
Where once the harass'd Briton found repose,
And safe in poverty defy'd his foes;
Some secret cell, ye Pow'rs indulgent give.
Let —— live here, for —— has learn'd to live.
Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth,
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.
Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
Collect a tax, or farm a lottery,
With warbling eunuchs fill our licens'd stage,
And lull to servitude a thoughtless age.
  "Heroes, proceed! what bounds your pride shall hold?
What check restrain your thirst of pow'r and gold?
Behold rebellious Virtue quite o'erthrown,
Behold our fame, our wealth, our lives your own.
  "To such the plunder of a land is giv'n,
When public crimes inflame the wrath of Heav'n;
But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,

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Hiss'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
Their air, their dress, their politics import;
Obsequious, artful, voluble, and gay,
On Britain's fond credulity they prey.
No gainful trade their industry can 'scape,
They sing, they dance, clean shoes, their fiddles scrape:
All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,
And, bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.
"Ah! what avails it that, from slav'ry far,
I draw the breath of life in English air;
Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lisp the tale of Henry's victories,
If the gull'd conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery prevails when arms are vain?
"Studious to please, and ready to submit,
The supple Gaul was born a parasite:
Still to his int'rest true, where'er he goes,
Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;
In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,
From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.
These arts in vain our rugged natives try,
Strain out with falt'ring diffidence a lie,
And gain a kick for awkward flattery.
"Besides, with justice, this discerning age
Admires their wondrous talents for the stage:
Well may they venture on the mimic's art,
Who play from morn till night a borrow'd part;
Practis'd their master's notions to embrace,
Repeat his maxims, and reflect his face;
With ev'ry wild absurdity comply,
And view each object with another's eye;
To shake with laughter ere the jest they hear,
To pour at will the counterfeited tear;
And, as their patron hints the cold or heat,
To shake in dog days, in December sweat.
"How, when competitors like these contend,
Can surly Virtue hope to fix a friend?
Slaves that with serious impudence beguile,
And lie without a blush, without a smile; . . .
Can Balbo's eloquence applaud, and swear
He gropes his breeches with a monarch's air!

"For arts like these preferr'd, admir'd, caress'd,
They first invade your table, then your breast;
Explore your secrets with insidious art,
Watch the weak hour, and ransack all the heart;
Then soon your ill-placed confidence repay,
Commence your lords, and govern or betray.
"By numbers here from shame or censure free,
All crimes are safe but hated poverty:
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse.
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak
Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;
With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,
And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
Of all the griefs that harass the distress'd,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
"Has Heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?
Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
And bear Oppression's insolence no more.
This mournful truth is everywhere confess'd,
Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd:
But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold:
Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
The groom retails the favors of his lord.
"But hark! th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
Roll through the streets, and thunder to the skies:
Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and pow'r,
Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r,
Aghast you start, and scarce with aching sight
Sustain th' approaching fire's tremendous light;
Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,
And leave your little all to flames a prey;
Then through the world a wretched vagrant roam,
For where can starving Merit find a home?
In vain your mournful narrative disclose,

While all neglect, and most insult your woes.
"Should Heaven's just bolts Orgilio's wealth confound,
And spread his flaming palace on the ground,
Swift o'er the land the dismal rumour flies,
And public mournings pacify the skies;
The laureat tribe in venal verse relate,
How Virtue wars with persecuting fate;
With well-feign'd gratitude the pension'd band
Refund the plunder of the beggar'd land.
See! while he builds, the gaudy vassals come,
And crowd with sudden wealth the rising dome;
The price of boroughs and of souls restore,
And raise his treasures higher than before:
Now blessed with all the baubles of the great,
The polish'd marble and the shining plate,
Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,
And hopes from angry Heaven another fire.
"Could'st thou resign the park and play content,
For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;
There might'st thou find some elegant retreat,
Some hireling senator's deserted seat;
And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand,
There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flow'rs,
Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs;
And, while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,
Despise the dainties of a venal lord:
There ev'ry bush with Nature's music rings,
There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings;
On all thy hours security shall smile,
And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.
"*Prepare for death, if here at night you roam,*
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man,
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
Yet ev'n these heroes, mischievously gay,
Lords of the street, and *terrors of the way*;
Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine,

Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train and golden coach.
"In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose;
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest,
And plants, unseen, a dagger in your breast.
"Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye senatorian band,
Whose ways and means support the sinking land:
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
To rig another convoy for the king.
"A single gaol, in Alfred's golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair Justice, then, without constraint ador'd,
Held high the steady scale, but sheath'd the sword;
No spies were paid, no special juries known;
Blest age! but ah, how diff'rent from our own!
"Much could I add, but see the boat at hand,
The tide retiring calls me from the land:
Farewell!—When youth, and health, and fortune spent,
Thou fly'st for refuge to the wilds of Kent
And, tir'd like me with follies and with crimes,
In angry numbers warn'st succeeding times;
Then shall thy friend, nor thou refuse his aid,
Still foe to vice, forsake his Cambrian shade;
In Virtue's cause once more exert his rage,
Thy satire point, and animate thy page."

THE HAMMER OF IRONY



FIELDING'S Jonathan Wild *is the most sustained and powerful piece of irony in all satire. Without the range of his great comic novels, it beats on the mind like the ring of an iron bell Its astringency is a strange distillation from the genial sanity that created the comic epic and blew like a high wind over all the England of Fielding's day, but it grows out of the same stronghearted realism that produced his other works. Added to them, it proves that Fielding could sound every note from Swiftian irony to a wild and rollicking buffoonery. His* Tragedy of Tragedies; or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb *is an almost unbelievably funny burlesque of the pseudo-classical drama phrased in language of outrageous bombast. The King announces in nobly swelling iambics his intention to spend an evening of carousal.*

> *Tonight it is Our purpose to get drunk,*
> *And this, Our Queen, shall be as drunk as We.*

The death of the heroine is pathetically lamented in the words "O! Hunkamunka, Hunkamunka O!" At the scene in which Lord Grizzle kills Tom Thumb's ghost even so exigent a reader as Jonathan Swift laughed out loud.

More serious in purpose, hardly less hilarious in manner, Joseph Andrews *began as a parody of* Pamela. *Richardson's heroine, sedulously*

guarding her chastity against the repeated assaults of her unscrupulous employer, Mr. B - - - -, was able finally, like a cunning haggler, to dispose of it at the highest market price: marriage with the would-be seducer. Fielding invents a brother named Joseph, who is no less chaste than his sister, and who is a footman to Lady Booby. But Joseph's reward, when he virtuously refuses to be seduced by his mistress, is to find himself kicked downstairs and out of the house—a rather more probable fate than Pamela's. Tom Jones *poses a full-fledged counterdemonstration to this tradesmanlike morality in which virtue is represented as a matter of following prudential maxims and reaping material rewards. Scapegrace Tom Jones drinks, roisters, and is far from sedulously chaste, but he is warm-hearted and straightforward; he doesn't, like the smooth Blifil maliciously releasing Sophia's bird because "the poor creature languished for liberty," give a fine reason for doing a mean thing. Morality, Fielding insists, is not calculating and practical; it cheapens goodness to defend it by arguing that it pays. Always, in both books, Fielding's stand is consistently the same the true goodness of Parson Adams may need to be better directed by intelligence, but it is goodness, which springs from the heart in spontaneous sweetness, generosity, and love; and goodness is* not *mere good manners, obedience to convention, or enlightened self-interest.*

Rambling through the green fields and along the high roads of eighteenth-century England, ranging the gamut of society from Sir Thomas Booby's town house and Squire Western's country estate to Black George's cottage, now toasting their toes at the roaring fires of rural taverns, now surrounded by the bustle of some fashionable watering place or the noise of London, always full of sunlight and fresh air, Tom Jones *and* Joseph Andrews *have much more in them than demonstrating a doctrine or satirizing a fellow novelist: they are as large and lusty as life. But their sanity and health of vision are the sustaining values that give strength and wisdom to Fielding's satire as well.*

Fielding knew that Pamela was no more than a coarse-grained opportunist with an eye to the main chance, and his own Blifil only a petty villain. Nevertheless, their qualities, selfishness and lack of moral delicacy, are the small beginings of the vices which, grown to full stature, fill the globe with self-seeking, aggression, and cruelty. Pamela does no positive evil. She merely fails to feel that a man who has tried bribery, abduction, assault, and rape hardly becomes a desirable husband and human being when in pure exhaustion he offers wedlock to gratify his desires. All she

sees is that for a servant girl to marry her employer is a great step upward in the world. Multiply her lack of nicety by a good round number and you get Blifil—ready to lie, connive, ingratiate, and deceive. Multiply Blifil, in brain, boldness, greed, or brutality, and you get a Caligula or an Alexander You get, in brief, one of those figures of history which when they operate on a sufficiently grandiose scale of evil are called great men.

With a few insignificant and miserable exceptions, like saints, philosophers, scientists, artists, and poets, many of whom were either ignored or maltreated in their lifetimes, those whom the world has called great, Fielding points out, have usually been those who excelled in satisfying their own desires by inflicting injuries on others Mingling any ideas of goodness with the idea of greatness is mere confusion of mind. Greatness is in reality nothing but a relentless, remorseless, undeviating will to power It is the force that has animated all the captains and conquerors, the political manipulators, and the financial exploiters, and run in thick streaks through the millionaires and malefactors of the ages. The degree to which they have possessed it ensured whether they should be small-time scoundrels or—Great Men. Such is the ironic reasoning by which Fielding brings us to Jonathan Wild, bully, highwayman, cheat, gangster, organizer and monopolist of crime, as a great man. For in Jonathan the will to power appears in its purest form, undiminished by any faltering of the ego and unadulterated by any weakening virtue. If we revere a Rockefeller for his millions or a Napoleon for his conquests, in logic we should admire Wild.

On the premises built up by this argument Fielding constructs, as I have said, the most sustained and consistent work of ironic narrative in all satire No other satirist approaches his achievement except Thorstein Veblen, and even Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class *sometimes drops the mask for a moment,* Jonathan Wild *never. From beginning to end, Fielding not only presents Wild as a great man, he pretends to admire his greatness; and he not only does this, he consistently pretends to sneer at every quality that might be an obstacle to greatness as despicably weak and contemptible He never deviates from the tone of heroic narrative and never fails to commend Wild's lowest villainies as the loftiest triumphs. These facts not only make* Jonathan Wild *an extraordinary tour de force; they endow it with a kind of cruel power and brutal wit unexampled even in satire. The tremendous depth of unspoken condemnation is like the cold menace of an iceberg moving with nine-tenths of its destructive strength hidden beneath the sea.*

his last moments; accordingly all efforts for a reprieve were vain, and the name of Wild stood at the head of those who were ordered for execution.

From the time he gave over all hopes of life, his conduct was truly great and admirable. Instead of showing any marks of dejection or contrition, he rather infused more confidence and assurance into his looks. He spent most of his hours in drinking with his friends and with the good man above commemorated. In one of these compotations, being asked whether he was afraid to die, he answered, "Damn me, it is only a dance without music." Another time, when one expressed some sorrow for his misfortune, as he termed it, he said with great fierceness, "A man can die but once." Again, when one of his intimate acquaintance hinted his hopes that he would die like a man, he cocked his hat in defiance, and cries out greatly—"Zounds! who's afraid?"

Happy would it have been for posterity, could we have retrieved any entire conversation which passed at this season, especially between our hero and his learned comforter, but we have searched many pasteboard records in vain.

On the eve of his apotheosis, Wild's lady desired to see him, to which h consented. This meeting was at first very tender on both sides; but it coul not continue so, for unluckily, some hints of former miscarriages inter vening, as particularly when she asked him how he could have used her s barbarously once as calling her bitch, and whether such language becam a man, much less a gentleman, Wild flew into a violent passion, and swor she was the vilest of bitches to upbraid him at such a season with an ur guarded word spoke long ago She replied, with many tears, she was we enough served for her folly in visiting such a brute; but she had one com fort, however, that it would be the last time he could ever treat her so, th indeed she had some obligation to him, for that his cruelty to her woul reconcile her to the fate he was to-morrow to suffer; and, indeed, nothin but such brutality could have made the consideration of his shameful deat (so this weak woman called hanging), which was now inevitable, to t borne even without madness. She then proceeded to a recapitulation of h faults in an exacter order, and with more perfect memory, than one woul have imagined her capable of; and it is probable would have rehearsed complete catalogue had not our hero's patience failed him, so that with th utmost fury and violence he caught her by the hair and kicked her heartily as his chains would suffer him out of the room.

At length the morning came which Fortune at his birth had resolute ordained for the consummation of our hero's GREATNESS: he had himse indeed modestly declined the public honours she intended him, and h taken a quantity of laudanum, in order to retire quietly off the stage; b

we have already observed, in the course of our wonderful history, that to struggle against this lady's decrees is vain and impotent; and whether she hath determined you shall be hanged or be a prime minister, it is in either case lost labour to resist. Laudanum, therefore, being unable to stop the breath of our hero, which the fruit of hemp-seed, and not the spirit of poppy-seed, was to overcome, he was at the usual hour attended by the proper gentleman appointed for that purpose, and acquainted that the cart was ready. On this occasion he exerted that greatness of courage which hath been so much celebrated in other heroes, and, knowing it was impossible to resist, he gravely declared he would attend them. He then descended to that room where the fetters of great men are knocked off in a most solemn and ceremonious manner. Then shaking hands with his friends (to wit, those who were conducting him to the tree), and drinking their healths in a bumper of brandy, he ascended the cart, where he was no sooner seated than he received the acclamations of the multitude, who were highly ravished with his GREATNESS.

The cart now moved slowly on, being preceded by a troop of horse-guards bearing javelins in their hands, through streets lined with crowds all admiring the great behaviour of our hero, who rode on, sometimes sighing, sometimes swearing, sometimes singing or whistling, as his humour varied. When he came to the tree of glory he was welcomed with an universal shout of the people, who were there assembled in prodigious numbers to behold a sight much more rare in populous cities than one would reasonably imagine it should be, viz. the proper catastrophe of a great man.

But though envy was, through fear, obliged to join the general voice in applause on this occasion, there were not wanting some who maligned this completion of glory, which was now about to be fulfilled to our hero, and endeavoured to prevent it by knocking him on the head as he stood under the tree, while the ordinary was performing his last office. They therefore began to batter the cart with stones, brickbats, dirt, and all manner of mischievous weapons, some of which, erroneously playing on the robes of the ecclesiastic, made him so expeditious in his repetition that with wonderful alacrity he had ended almost in an instant, and conveyed himself into a place of safety in a hackney-coach, where he waited the conclusion with a temper of mind described in these verses:

Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra alterius magnum spectare laborem.

We must not, however, omit one circumstance, as it serves to show the most admirable conservation of character in our hero to the last moment; which was that, whilst the ordinary was busy in his ejaculations, Wild, in the midst of the shower of stones, &c., which played upon him, applied

his hands to the parson's pocket, and emptied it of his bottle-screw, which he carried out of the world in his hand.

The ordinary being now descended from the cart, Wild had just opportunity to cast his eyes around the crowd, and to give them a hearty curse, when immediately the horses moved on, and with universal applause our hero swung out of this world.

Thus fell Jonathan Wild the GREAT, by a death as glorious as his life had been, and which was so truly agreeable to it that the latter must have been deplorably maimed and imperfect without the former; a death which hath been alone wanting to complete the characters of several ancient and modern heroes, whose histories would then have been read with much greater pleasure by the wisest in all ages. Indeed we could almost wish that whenever Fortune seems wantonly to deviate from her purpose, and leaves her work imperfect in this particular, the historian would indulge himself in the licence of poetry and romance, and even do a violence to truth, to oblige his reader with a page which must be the most delightful in all the history, and which could never fail of producing an instructive moral.

Narrow minds may possibly have some reason to be ashamed of going this way out of the world, if their consciences can fly in their faces and assure them they have not merited such an honour; but he must be a fool who is ashamed of being hanged, who is not weak enough to be ashamed of having deserved it.

The Character of Wild, and Conclusion

We will now endeavour to draw the character of this great man; and, by bringing together those several features as it were of his mind which lie scattered up and down in this history, to present our readers with a perfect picture of greatness.

Jonathan Wild had every qualification necessary to form a great man. As his most powerful and predominant passion was ambition, so nature had, with consummate propriety, adapted all his faculties to the attaining those glorious ends to which this passion directed him. He was extremely ingenious in inventing designs, artful in contriving the means to accomplish his purposes, and resolute in executing them: for as the most exquisite cunning and most undaunted boldness qualified him for any undertaking, so was he not restrained by any of those weaknesses which disappoint the views of mean and vulgar souls, and which are comprehended in one general term of honesty, which is a corruption of HONOSTY, a word derived from what the Greeks call an ass. He was entirely free from those low

vices of modesty and good-nature, which, as he said, implied a total negation of human greatness, and were the only qualities which absolutely rendered a man incapable of making a considerable figure in the world. His lust was inferior only to his ambition; but, as for what simple people call love, he knew not what it was. His avarice was immense, but it was of the rapacious, not of the tenacious kind, his rapaciousness was indeed so violent that nothing ever contented him but the whole; for, however considerable the share was which his coadjutors allowed him of a booty, he was restless in inventing means to make himself master of the smallest pittance reserved by them. He said laws were made for the use of *prigs* only, and to secure their property; they were never therefore more perverted than when their edge was turned against these; but that this generally happened through their want of sufficient dexterity. The character which he most valued himself upon, and which he principally honoured in others, was that of hypocrisy. His opinion was that no one could carry *priggism* very far without it; for which reason, he said, there was little greatness to be expected in a man who acknowledged his vices, but always much to be hoped from him who professed great virtues: wherefore, though he would always shun the person whom he discovered guilty of a good action, yet he was never deterred by a good character, which was more commonly the effect of profession than of action; for which reason, he himself was always very liberal of honest professions, and had as much virtue and goodness in his mouth as a saint; never in the least scrupling to swear by his honour, even to those who knew him the best; nay, though he held good-nature and modesty in the highest contempt, he constantly practiced the affectation of both, and recommended this to others, whose welfare, on his own account, he wished well to. He laid down several maxims as the certain methods of attaining greatness, to which, in his own pursuit of it, he constantly adhered. As,

1. Never to do more mischief to another than was necessary to the effecting his purpose; for that mischief was too precious a thing to be thrown away.
2. To know no distinction of men from affection; but to sacrifice all with equal readiness to his interest.
3. Never to communicate more of an affair than was necessary to the person who was to execute it.
4. Not to trust him who hath deceived you, nor who knows he hath been deceived by you.
5. To forgive no enemy; but to be cautious and often dilatory in revenge.
6. To shun poverty and distress, and to ally himself as close as possible to power and riches.

7. To maintain a constant gravity in his countenance and behaviour, and to affect wisdom on all occasions.

8. To foment eternal jealousies in his gang, one of another.

9 Never to reward any one equal to his merit; but always to insinuate that the reward was above it.

10. That all men were knaves or fools, and much the greater number a composition of both.

11. That a good name, like money, must be parted with, or at least greatly risked, in order to bring the owner any advantage.

12. That virtues, like precious stones, were easily counterfeited; that the counterfeits in both cases adorned the wearer equally, and that very few had knowledge or discernment sufficient to distinguish the counterfeit jewel from the real.

13. That many men were undone by not going deep enough in roguery; as in gaming any man may be a loser who doth not play the whole game.

14. That men proclaim their own virtues, as shopkeepers expose their goods, in order to profit by them.

15. That the heart was the proper seat of hatred, and the countenance of affection and friendship.

He had many more of the same kind, all equally good with these, and which were after his decease found in his study, as the twelve excellent and celebrated rules were in that of King Charles the First; for he never promulgated them in his lifetime, not having them constantly in his mouth, as some grave persons have the rules of virtue and morality, without paying the least regard to them in their actions; whereas our hero, by a constant and steady adherence to his rules in conforming everything he did to them, acquired at length a settled habit of walking by them, till at last he was in no danger of inadvertently going out of the way; and by these means he arrived at that degree of greatness which few have equalled, none, we may say, have exceeded: for, though it must be allowed that there have been some few heroes who have done greater mischiefs to mankind, such as those who have betrayed the liberty of their country to others, or have undermined and overpowered it themselves; or conquerors who have impoverished, pillaged, sacked, burnt, and destroyed the countries and cities of their fellow-creatures, from no other provocation than that of glory, *i.e.* as the tragic poet calls it,

> a privilege to kill,
> A strong temptation to do bravely ill;

yet, if we consider it in the light wherein actions are placed in this line,

> *Lætius est, quoties magno tibi constat honestum;*

when we see our hero, without the least assistance or pretence, setting him-

self at the head of a gang which he had not any shadow of right to govern; if we view him maintaining absolute power and exercising tyranny over a lawless crew, contrary to all law but that of his own will; if we consider him setting up an open trade publicly, in defiance not only of the laws of his country but of the common sense of his countrymen; if we see him first contriving the robbery of others, and again the defrauding the very robbers of that booty which they had ventured their necks to acquire, and which, without any hazard, they might have retained, here sure he must appear admirable, and we may challenge not only the truth of history, but almost the latitude of fiction, to equal his glory.

Nor had he any of those flaws in his character which, though they have been commended by weak writers, have (as I hinted in the beginning of this history) by the judicious reader been censured and despised. Such was the clemency of Alexander and Cæsar, which nature had so grossly erred in giving them, as a painter would who should dress a peasant in robes of state, or give the nose or any other feature of a Venus to a satyr What had the destroyers of mankind, that glorious pair, one of whom came into the world to usurp the dominion and abolish the constitution of his own country; the other to conquer, enslave, and rule over the whole world, at least as much as was well known to him, and the shortness of his life would give him leave to visit, what had, I say, such as these to do with clemency? Who cannot see the absurdity and contradiction of mixing such an ingredient with those noble and great qualities I have before mentioned? Now, in *Wild everything was truly great, almost without alloy, as his imperfections* (for surely some small ones he had) were only such as served to denominate him a human creature, of which kind none ever arrived at consummate excellence. But surely his whole behaviour to his friend Heartfree is a convincing proof that the true iron or steel greatness of his heart was not debased by any softer metal. Indeed, while greatness consists in power, pride, insolence, and doing mischief to mankind—to speak out—while a great man and a great rogue are synonymous terms, so long shall Wild stand unrivalled on the pinnacle of GREATNESS. Nor must we omit here, as the finishing of his character, what indeed ought to be remembered on his tomb or his statue, the conformity above mentioned of his death to his life; and that Jonathan Wild the Great, after all his mighty exploits, was, what so few GREAT men can accomplish—hanged by the neck till he was dead.

VOLTAIRE: DYNAMO OF COMMON SENSE



IT IS impossible to do justice to the satiric energy of Voltaire. For years he deluged all Europe with an almost incredible number and variety of witty and insidious attacks on well-nigh every conceivable delusion and absurdity. Epigrams, letters, pamphlets, essays, mystery stories, dialogues, fantasies, philosophical treatises, tales of adventure, scientific articles, they took every imaginable form and turned up everywhere, signed by a ridiculous series of fantastic pseudonyms, all thrown out at fever heat by that burning fountain at Ferney.

But even these were only a small fraction of Voltaire's total activity. His early fame had been won as poet and dramatist. And he continued throughout his entire lifetime to pour forth an unending stream of classical tragedies—Zaïre, Mérope, *and many more—which were regarded in his own day as among the first literary achievements of the age. He had written an epic* Henriade *celebrating the career of Henry of Navarre; his mock-epic* La Pucelle *made daringly blasphemous mockery of Joan of Arc, and had a subsidiary heroine* Agnes Sorel, *mistress of the Dauphin, who in canto after canto is hilariously raped with a frequency that would have*

filled the heroines of Boccaccio with wistful envy. At a time when the thought of his own country was dominated by Descartes, Voltaire introduced to France the philosophy of Isaac Newton; his English Letters *praised the British Constitution in the face of French absolutism His brilliant* Essay on Manners *and his* Age of Louis XIV *make him the first modern historian to treat history not as a record of kings and conquests, but as a panorama of society and civilization.*

His personal activities were no less vigorous than his intellectual productivity. On his large estate at Ferney, from which he could conveniently flee into Geneva if necessary, he directed extensive agricultural operations and had established a successful colony of watchmakers. He maintained an enormous correspondence with every important personage in Europe, from savants and men of letters to Frederick the Great and the Empress Catherine of Russia. He entertained a constant succession of visitors, and in the evening often regaled them with theatricals, acting in his own tragedies upon the stage of his own private theater. Constantly he complained of a fatal complication of illnesses, he sat in bed writing letters announcing his own imminent demise; and the next day he would be up overseeing some new horticultural experiment in his orchards or grinning over the jibes in some new attack on the Church which would presently appear in Amsterdam as the theological work of a learned Jesuit.

Voltaire was at once profoundly religious and among the most profoundly irreligious of men. Capable in his personal behavior of the meanest dissimulations and the pettiest dishonesties, he was nevertheless filled with a passion for human welfare, a burning hatred of intolerance. a veritable frenzy in the face of cruelty and suffering. No considerations of caution or safety could then restrain him, laughing with the terrible mockery of a demon or an angel he moved forward to the attack, returned to it again and again, pouring forth floods of witticisms that exploded like fireworks and invective that burned like molten iron. He became a fury in the grip of some deep and inexplicable ethical compulsion.

But he was so far from realizing the roots of his own moral passion that he had neither sympathy nor understanding for any sort of mystical emotion. Feelings of communion with the divine, sentiments of perceiving intuitively the goodness and beneficence of the universe, Voltaire dismissed with grinning irreverence. All claimants to revelation or insight he found lunatics, fools, or impostors. For the ecclesiastical institutions they had made he had nothing but scorn; for the persecuting temper nothing but implaca-

ble hatred. "Écrasez l'infame!" was his grim battle cry against the burnings, bloodshed, breaking on wheels, and disembowelings by which the Christian sects had signalized their belief in love and the brotherhood of man. "What?" he exploded bitterly to someone who asked what substitute he would propose for religion. "I help you destroy a noxious monster, and you ask me what I would put in its place!"

The tyrannies of secular authority Voltaire found only a degree less detestable. As for the philosophers, with their crackbrained systems and their metaphysical dogmas about things nobody could possibly know, their grandiose generalizations about the remotest crannies of the cosmos, they were merely ludicrous. Voltaire never tired of girding at their pretensions. In conversations and in letters he maintained a running fire of ridicule, in essays and in fiction he raked them with criticism. Candide is the greatest of these philosophic attacks on the philosophers. In it, Voltaire makes savage mockery of Leibnitz's "best of all possible worlds," or rather of that complacent eighteenth-century optimism which interpreted Leibnitz as meaning best of all conceivable worlds.

Pope's Essay on Man, perhaps better than Leibnitz, voices the effervescent faith Voltaire set out to destroy. The universal frame, sang the poet, was a heavenly harmony within which even earthquake and pestilence were benign.

> All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee,
> All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see.

Voltaire shows the ingenuous Candide being taught by his preceptor Pangloss that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and that everything is justified by the principle of "sufficient reason." "Observe," the philosopher exquisitely says, "that the nose has been formed to wear spectacles—thus we wear spectacles." Follows a panorama of every misfortune, Candide hurried everywhere over the globe, everywhere both witness and victim of the most frightful suffering: where catastrophe is, there is Candide. "Best of all possible worlds?" Voltaire seems to be echoing in our ears; and through war, pillage, rape, murder, storm, drowning, earthquake, torture, burning at the stake, mutilation, slavery, and pestilence he never once relaxes his ferocious grin.

No human beings, not even a crew of round-the-world fliers, were ever so rapidly and unceasingly moved from place to place so that the evils of humanity and the upheavals of nature might combine to plague them.

But there is little to the frequent criticism that this is a defect of Voltaire's plan, nor to the angry outcry that he exaggerates. Constantly separated, constantly thrown together again, always worse off than they were before, Candide, Pangloss, and Cunegonde are but devices for dramatizing what the dweller in his own mental suburb fails to feel vividly the suffering that he does not see. Our newspapers provide us every day with a catalogue of horrors longer than Voltaire reviewed in Candide, *but there is something very anesthetic about newsprint and very pallid about suffering too remote and on too great a scale. A single child murder in the next county awakens more horror than children starving by wholesale in India or China. It comes with an ill grace, however, that our insensitiveness should accuse Voltaire of exaggeration.*

Partly the accusation arises, to be sure, out of a misunderstanding of his intention. Voltaire was refuting the vulgar optimism that saw no flaws in nature or human nature. He was not insisting that all was for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds. By and large, he even seems to suggest, it is not much worse a world than men deserve. Their natures rebel against even felicity, when Candide was in El Dorado he speedily grew bored, and chafed until he made his escape back into misery. Here, if you will, Voltaire exaggerates—minimizes, rather—ignoring, and having much fun in ignoring, the amount of happiness in human life, until the movement of his plot becomes a wild and uproarious ballet of misfortune. But Voltaire did not expect us to take him seriously in every detail. It is enough for him to have covered with ridicule Pangloss's perfect "concatenation of events" in which everything makes for the best. "That is all very well," says Candide to himself, at the end, "but let us cultivate our garden"

Such is the wonderful common-sense wisdom of Voltaire's conclusion He is unique among both satirists and philosophers in offering one of the few pieces of practical advice that have ever been given for the conduct of life. For by "cultivating our garden" Voltaire means more, of course, than merely minding our own business and not bothering ourselves with what should not concern us, although he means that too. He means as well doing whatever useful things we find in ourselves a capacity for doing, cultivating our talents, developing our powers of fruitful activity to the fullest of their bent. This genius at destructive mockery emerges as a master of constructive criticism too Let us cultivate our gardens. It is the essence of Voltaire and the essence of sanity. Often the two seem one and the same.

CANDIDE

««« *Candide* was originally published in 1759 »»»

How Candide Was Expelled from the Castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh

In a castle of Westphalia, belonging to the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, lived a youth, whom nature had endowed with the most gentle manners. His countenance was a true picture of his soul. He combined a true judgment with simplicity of spirit, which was the reason, I apprehend, of his being called Candide. The old servants of the family suspected him to have been the son of the Baron's sister, by a good, honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom that young lady would never marry because he had been able to prove only seventy-one quarterings, the rest of his genealogical tree having been lost through the injuries of time.

The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle had not only a gate, but windows His great hall, even, was hung with tapestry. All the dogs of his farmyards formed a pack of hounds at need, his grooms were his huntsmen; and the curate of the village was his grand almoner. They called him "My Lord," and laughed at all his stories.

The Baron's lady weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, and was therefore a person of great consideration, and she did the honours of the house with a dignity that commanded still greater respect. Her daughter Cunegonde was seventeen years of age, fresh-coloured, comely, plump, and desirable. The Baron's son seemed to be in every respect worthy of his father. The Preceptor Pangloss was the oracle of the family, and little Candide heard his lessons with all the good faith of his age and character.

Pangloss was professor of metaphysico-theologico-cosmolo-nigology. He proved admirably that there is no effect without a cause, and that, in this best of all possible worlds, the Baron's castle was the most magnificent of castles, and his lady the best of all possible Baronesses.

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end Observe, that the nose has been formed to bear spectacles—thus we have spectacles. Legs are visibly designed for stockings—and we have stockings. Stones were made to be hewn, and to construct castles—therefore my lord has a magnificent castle; for the greatest baron in the province ought to be the best lodged. Pigs were made to be eaten—therefore we eat pork all the

year round. Consequently tney who assert that all is well have said a foolish thing, they should have said all is for the best."

Candide listened attentively and believed innocently; for he thought Miss Cunegonde extremely beautiful, though he never had the courage to tell her so. He concluded that after the happiness of being born Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, the second degree of happiness was to be Miss Cunegonde, the third that of seeing her every day, and the fourth that of hearing Master Pangloss, the greatest philosopher of the whole province, and consequently of the whole world.

One day Cunegonde, while walking near the castle, in a little wood which they called a park, saw between the bushes, Dr. Pangloss giving a lesson in experimental natural philosophy to her mother's chamber-maid, a little brown wench, very pretty and very docile. As Miss Cunegonde had a great disposition for the sciences, she breathlessly observed the repeated experiments of which she was a witness, she clearly perceived the force of the Doctor's reasons, the effects, and the causes; she turned back greatly flurried, quite pensive, and filled with the desire to be learned, dreaming that she might well be a *sufficient reason* for young Candide, and he for her.

She met Candide on reaching the castle and blushed, Candide blushed also, she wished him good morrow in a faltering tone, and Candide spoke to her without knowing what he said. The next day after dinner, as they went from table, Cunegonde and Candide found themselves behind a screen; Cunegonde let fall her handkerchief, Candide picked it up, she took him innocently by the hand, the youth as innocently kissed the young lady's hand with particular vivacity, sensibility, and grace; their lips met, their eyes sparkled, their knees trembled, their hands strayed. Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh passed near the screen and beholding this cause and effect chased Candide from the castle with great kicks on the backside; Cunegonde fainted away; she was boxed on the ears by the Baroness, as soon as she came to herself; and all was consternation in this most magnificent and most agreeable of all possible castles.

How Candide Found Pangloss Again, and They Experienced Shipwreck and Earthquake

The next day, as he took a walk, he met a beggar all covered with scabs, his eyes diseased, the end of his nose eaten away, his mouth distorted, his teeth black, choking in his throat, tormented with a violent cough, and spitting out a tooth at each effort.

Candide, yet more moved with compassion than with horror, gave to this

shocking beggar the two florins which he had received from the honest Anabaptist James. The spectre looked at him very earnestly, dropped a few tears, and fell upon his neck. Candide recoiled in disgust.

"Alas!" said one wretch to the other, "do you no longer know your dear Pangloss?"

"What do I hear? You, my dear master! you in this terrible plight! What misfortune has happened to you? Why are you no longer in the most magnificent of castles? What has become of Miss Cunegonde, the pearl of girls, and nature's masterpiece?"

"I am so weak that I cannot stand," said Pangloss.

Upon which Candide carried him to the Anabaptist's stable, and gave him a crust of bread. As soon as Pangloss had refreshed himself a little:

"Well," said Candide, "Cunegonde?"

"She is dead," replied the other.

Candide fainted at this word, his friend recalled his senses with a little bad vinegar which he found by chance in the stable. Candide reopened his eyes.

"Cunegonde is dead! Ah, best of worlds, where art thou? But of what illness did she die? Was it not for grief, upon seeing her father kick me out of his magnificent castle?"

"No," said Pangloss, "she was ripped open by the Bulgarian soldiers, after having been violated by many; they broke the Baron's head for attempting to defend her; my lady, her mother, was cut in pieces, my poor pupil was served just in the same manner as his sister; and as for the castle, they have not left one stone upon another, not a barn, nor a sheep, nor a duck, nor a tree; but we have had our revenge, for the Abares have done the very same thing to a neighbouring barony, which belonged to a Bulgarian lord."

At this discourse Candide fainted again; but coming to himself, and having said all that it became him to say, inquired into the cause and effect, as well as into the *sufficient reason* that had reduced Pangloss to so miserable a plight.

"Alas!" said the other, "it was love; love, the comfort of the human species, the preserver of the universe, the soul of all sensible beings, love, tender love."

"Alas!" said Candide, "I know this love, that sovereign of hearts, that soul of our souls; yet it never cost me more than a kiss and twenty kicks on the backside. How could this beautiful cause produce in you an effect so abominable?"

Pangloss made answer in these terms: "Oh, my dear Candide, you remember Paquette, that pretty wench who waited on our noble Baroness, in her arms I tasted the delights of paradise, which produced in me those hell tor-

ments with which you see me devoured, she was infected with them, she is perhaps dead of them. This present Paquette received of a learned Grey Friar, who had traced it to its source; he had had it of an old countess, who had received it from a cavalry captain, who owed it to a marchioness, who took it from a page, who had received it from a Jesuit, who when a novice had it in a direct line from one of the companions of Christopher Columbus. For my part I shall give it to nobody, I am dying."

"Oh, Pangloss!" cried Candide, "what a strange genealogy! Is not the Devil the original stock of it?"

"Not at all," replied this great man, "it was a thing unavoidable, a necessary ingredient in the best of worlds; for if Columbus had not in an island of America caught this disease, which contaminates the source of life, frequently even hinders generation, and which is evidently opposed to the great end of nature, we should have neither chocolate nor cochineal. We are also to observe that upon our continent, this distemper is like religious controversy, confined to a particular spot. The Turks, the Indians, the Persians, the Chinese, the Siamese, the Japanese, know nothing of it, but there is a sufficient reason for believing that they will know it in their turn in a few centuries. In the meantime, it has made marvellous progress among us, especially in those great armies composed of honest well-disciplined hirelings, who decide the destiny of states; for we may safely affirm that when an army of thirty thousand men fights another of an equal number, there are about twenty thousand of them p–x–d on each side."

"Well, this is wonderful!" said Candide, "but you must get cured."

"Alas! how can I?" said Pangloss, "I have not a farthing, my friend, and all over the globe there is no letting of blood or taking a glister, without paying, or somebody paying for you."

These last words determined Candide; he went and flung himself at the feet of the charitable Anabaptist James, and gave him so touching a picture of the state to which his friend was reduced, that the good man did not scruple to take Dr. Pangloss into his house, and had him cured at his expense. In the cure Pangloss lost only an eye and an ear. He wrote well, and knew arithmetic perfectly. The Anabaptist James made him his bookkeeper. At the end of two months, being obliged to go to Lisbon about some mercantile affairs, he took the two philosophers with him in his ship. Pangloss explained to him how everything was so constituted that it could not be better. James was not of this opinion.

"It is more likely," said he, "mankind have a little corrupted nature, for they were not born wolves, and they have become wolves; God has given them neither cannon of four-and-twenty pounders, nor bayonets; and yet they have made cannon and bayonets to destroy one another. Into this

account I might throw not only bankrupts, but Justice which seizes on the effects of bankrupts to cheat the creditors."

"All this was indispensable," replied the one-eyed doctor, "for private misfortunes make the general good, so that the more private misfortunes there are the greater is the general good."

While he reasoned, the sky darkened, the winds blew from the four quarters, and the ship was assailed by a most terrible tempest within sight of the port of Lisbon.

Half dead of that inconceivable anguish which the rolling of a ship produces, one-half of the passengers were not even sensible of the danger. The other half shrieked and prayed. The sheets were rent, the masts broken, the vessel gaped. Work who would, no one heard, no one commanded The Anabaptist being upon deck bore a hand; when a brutish sailor struck him roughly and laid him sprawling; but with the violence of the blow he himself tumbled head foremost overboard, and stuck upon a piece of the broken mast. Honest James ran to his assistance, hauled him up, and from the effort he made was precipitated into the sea in sight of the sailor, who left him to perish, without deigning to look at him. Candide drew near and saw his benefactor, who rose above the water one moment and was then swallowed up for ever. He was just going to jump after him, but was prevented by the philosopher Pangloss, who demonstrated to him that the Bay of Lisbon had been made on purpose for the Anabaptist to be drowned. While he was proving this *a priori*, the ship foundered, all perished except Pangloss, Candide, and that brutal sailor who had drowned the good Anabaptist. The villain swam safely to the shore, while Pangloss and Candide were borne thither upon a plank.

As soon as they recovered themselves a little they walked toward Lisbon. They had some money left, with which they hoped to save themselves from starving, after they had escaped drowning. Scarcely had they reached the city, lamenting the death of their benefactor, when they felt the earth tremble under their feet. The sea swelled and foamed in the harbour, and beat to pieces the vessels riding at anchor. Whirlwinds of fire and ashes covered the streets and public places; houses fell, roofs were flung upon the pavements, and the pavements were scattered. Thirty thousand inhabitants of all ages and sexes were crushed under the ruins. The sailor, whistling and swearing, said there was booty to be gained here.

"What can be the *sufficient reason* of this phenomenon?" said Pangloss

"This is the Last Day!" cried Candide.

The sailor ran among the ruins, facing death to find money; finding it, he took it, got drunk, and having slept himself sober, purchased the favours of the first good-natured wench whom he met on the ruins of the destroyed

houses, and in the midst of the dying and the dead. Pangloss pulled him by the sleeve.

"My friend," said he, "this is not right. You sin against the *universal reason;* you choose your time badly."

"S'blood and fury!" answered the other; "I am a sailor and born at Batavia. Four times have I trampled upon the crucifix in four voyages to Japan; a fig for thy universal reason."

Some falling stones had wounded Candide. He lay stretched in the street covered with rubbish.

How Candide Found Cunegonde Again

While Candide, the Baron, Pangloss, Martin, and Cacambo were relating their several adventures, were reasoning on the contingent or non-contingent events of the universe, disputing on effects and causes, on moral and physical evil, on liberty and necessity, and on the consolations a slave may feel even on a Turkish galley, they arrived at the house of the Transylvanian prince on the banks of the Propontis. The first objects which met their sight were Cunegonde and the old woman hanging towels out to dry.

The Baron paled at this sight. The tender, loving Candide, seeing his beautiful Cunegonde, embrowned, with blood-shot eyes, withered neck, wrinkled cheeks, and rough, red arms, recoiled three paces, seized with horror, and then advanced out of good manners. She embraced Candide and her brother; they embraced the old woman, and Candide ransomed them both.

There was a small farm in the neighbourhood which the old woman proposed to Candide to make a shift with till the company could be provided for in a better manner. Cunegonde did not know she had grown ugly, for nobody had told her of it; and she reminded Candide of his promise in so positive a tone that the good man durst not refuse her. . . .

It is natural to imagine that after so many disasters Candide married, and living with the philosopher Pangloss, the philosopher Martin, the prudent Cacambo, and the old woman, having besides brought so many diamonds from the country of the ancient Incas, must have led a very happy life. But he was so much imposed upon by the Jews that he had nothing left except his small farm; his wife became uglier every day, more peevish and unsupportable; the old woman was infirm and even more fretful than Cunegonde. Cacambo, who worked in the garden, and took vegetables for sale to Constantinople, was fatigued with hard work, and cursed his destiny. Pangloss was in despair at not shining in some German university. For Martin, he was

firmly persuaded that he would be as badly off elsewhere, and therefore bore things patiently. Candide, Martin, and Pangloss sometimes disputed about morals and metaphysics. . . .

In the neighbourhood there lived a very famous Dervish who was esteemed the best philosopher in all Turkey, and they went to consult him. Pangloss was the speaker.

"Master," said he, "we come to beg you to tell why so strange an animal as man was made."

"With what meddlest thou?" said the Dervish; "is it thy business?"

"But, reverend father," said Candide, "there is horrible evil in this world"

"What signifies it," said the Dervish, "whether there be evil or good? When his highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he trouble his head whether the mice on board are at their ease or not?"

"What, then, must we do?" said Pangloss.

"Hold your tongue," answered the Dervish.

"I was in hopes," said Pangloss, "that I should reason with you a little about causes and effects, about the best of possible worlds, the origin of evil, the nature of the soul, and the pre-established harmony."

At these words, the Dervish shut the door in their faces. . . .

"Let us work," said Martin, "without disputing; it is the only way to render life tolerable."

The whole little society entered into this laudable design, according to their different abilities. Their little plot of land produced plentiful crops. Cunegonde was, indeed, very ugly, but she became an excellent pastry cook; Paquette worked at embroidery, the old woman looked after the linen.

Pangloss sometimes said to Candide:

"There is a concatenation of events in this best of all possible worlds: for if you had not been kicked out of a magnificent castle for love of Miss Cunegonde: if you had not been put into the Inquisition: if you had not walked over America: if you had not stabbed the Baron· if you had not lost all your sheep from the fine country of El Dorado: you would not be here eating preserved citrons and pistachio-nuts."

"All that is very well," answered Candide, "but let us cultivate our garden."

LAURENCE STERNE: THE PUCK OF THE MODERN NOVEL



AMONG ITS protean other attainments, Sterne's fantastic masterpiece is a novel satirizing the construction of novels. Even its title, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent., *is a joke; for the nominal hero, who is not even born until Book Three, figures but seldom in the action, and among all the opinions that cram every chapter the average reader would be baffled to remember one as Tristram's. There are half a dozen vivid characters, Captain Walter Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Yorick, the Widow Wadman, Dr. Slop, but no central character. The action is constantly interrupted, and isn't going anywhere anyhow. The preface and the dedication appear in the middle of the book, chapters turn up in the wrong place, everything is at sixes and sevens. Whatever you think a novel ought to be, that* Tristram Shandy *impishly is not, with Sterne turning cartwheels in and out of its pages, wringing out handkerchiefs soaked with*

tears, smirking at you between his fingers while he still heaves with sobs, and then kicking up his heels, arguing and cajoling, or thumbing his nose at you in a delirium of bad manners and high spirits.

There is, in fact, something Puckish about Sterne, something mischievous and out of this world. "It would not be really odd," writes E. M. Forster, *"if the furniture in Mr. Shandy's bedroom, where he retired in despair after hearing the omitted details of his son's birth, should come alive like Belinda's toilette in* The Rape of the Lock, *or that Uncle Toby's drawbridge should lead into Lilliput. There is a charmed stagnation about the whole epic—the more the characters do, the less gets done, the less they have to say the more they talk, the harder they think the softer they get, facts have an unholy tendency to unwind and trip up the past instead of begetting the future, as in well-conducted books, and the obstinacy of inanimate objects, like Dr. Slop's bag, is most suspicious. Obviously a god is hidden in* Tristram Shandy, *his name is Muddle, and some readers cannot accept him."*

One could imagine Henry James, for example, forcing himself to read Sterne, his dramatic conscience so horrified that his hair stood on end at such flagrant violations of all the laws of prose fiction. A fig for unity of tone, Sterne seems to say: Tristram Shandy *has more tones than a harlequin and even less pretense to design. As for Flaubertian objectivity, Sterne more than reminds you of his own existence: he nudges you, sidetracks the story for other concerns, considers the action and the characters with you, discusses and derides the conventions of novelistic structure. When Obadiah is sent for Dr. Slop, Sterne remarks after several pages that enough "reading" time has now passed for him to have gone and returned on the errand. Then, pretending he has a resistant reader on his hands, Sterne goes through all the motions of persuasion, reminding him that Dr. Slop lives only eight miles away, running over all the subjects that have been covered since Obadiah left, wrestling with this purely hypothetical objector to make him concede the point. And when we have gone through it all, the whole discussion turns out to be a hoax, for Obadiah has met Dr. Slop outside in the stable yard, and took not a second longer than it has taken us to read about it! But how sharply this foolery pricks our awareness of the difference between "real" time and "fictional" time, and of what produces a sense of duration in reading.*

Sterne's tricks with the technique of telling a story are countless, and his tricks with the people of his novel no less numerous. When he peeks

inside their heads, the results are always rich in deflation of human character. Death and mourning among the Shandys mean to Susannah's mind only the images of the green satin nightgown and red damask robe that will be hers by reversion, to the fat scullion only a stolid satisfaction that she herself is alive, to Trim the occasion for sententious moralizing—each giving way to some unconscious reflection of pure ego. Their most insignificant gestures under Sterne's observant gaze prove ludicrously or disastrously revealing. Trim strikes his stick perpendicularly on the floor, he drops his hat on the ground; Susannah lays her arm affectionately on Trim's shoulder while he asks, looking at her, "What is the finest face that ever man looked at!" and takes it off when he disappointingly ends, "—but corruption?" and in these trivial movements Sterne discovers as much as when he delves into their minds.

The truth is, of course, that Sterne's rebellion from the path of straight storytelling was neither unsophisticated simplicity nor mere enfant-terriblism. If he took a bad boy's delight in upsetting applecarts, he usually pounced on a multitude of strange things hidden under the apples, that we should never have suspected were there. Sterne anticipated by one hundred and fifty years Marcel Proust's subtle explorations into the parallel and alternative motives that may lie behind our behavior, and Joyce's use of the stream-of-consciousness as a means of conveying at the same time the essence of personality and the vivid texture of inward awareness. A score of other devices that Joyce painstakingly elaborated in Ulysses, *Sterne friskily tossed into the whip-syllabub of* Tristram Shandy. *His mad, whimsical, sentimental, witty, fantastic, daring, and destructive genius smashed the novel to smithereens. When he put it together again it was something very different in construction and psychology than it had been before.*

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENT.

*** Books I-II were published in 1759, Books III-VI in 1761-62, Books VII-VIII in 1765, the last part, which Sterne numbered X, in 1767. The selections given here are from Chapters 6-10 of Book II and Chapters 7-10 of Book V ***

Obadiah Goes for Dr. Slop While Uncle Toby Exhibits His Ignorance of Women

"WHAT CAN they be doing, brother?" said my father.—"I think," replied my uncle Toby,—taking, as I told you, his pipe from his mouth, and striking the ashes out of it as he began his sentence,—"I think," replied he,—"it would not be amiss, brother, if we rung the bell."

"Pray, what's all that racket over our heads, Obadiah?" quoth my father; "my brother and I can scarce hear ourselves speak."

"Sir," answered Obadiah, making a bow towards his left shoulder, "my Mistress is taken very badly."—"And where's Susannah running down the garden there, as if they were going to ravish her?"—"Sir, she is running the shortest cut into the town," replied Obadiah, "to fetch the old midwife."—"Then saddle a horse," quoth my father, "and do you go directly for Dr. Slop, the man-midwife, with all our services,—and let him know your mistress is fallen into labour—and that I desire he will return with you with all speed."

"It is very strange," says my father, addressing himself to my uncle Toby, as Obadiah shut the door, "as there is so expert an operator as Dr. Slop so near,—that my wife should persist to the very last in this obstinate humour of hers, in trusting the life of my child, who has had one misfortune already, to the ignorance of an old woman;—and not only the life of my child, brother,—but her own life, and with it the lives of all the children I might, peradventure, have begot out of her hereafter."

"Mayhap, brother," replied my uncle Toby, "my sister does it to save the expense."—"A pudding's end," replied my father, "the Doctor must be paid the same for inaction as action,—if not better,—to keep him in temper."

"Then it can be out of nothing in the whole world," quoth my uncle Toby, in the simplicity of his heart, "but Modesty.—My sister, I dare say,"

added he, "does not care to let a man come so near her****." I will not say whether my uncle Toby had completed the sentence or not,—'tis for his advantage to suppose he had,—as, I think, he could have added no One Word which would have improved it.

If, on the contrary, my uncle Toby had not fully arrived at the period's end,—then the world stands indebted to the sudden snapping of my father's tobacco-pipe for one of the neatest examples of that ornamental figure in oratory, which Rhetoricians style the Aposiopesis—Just Heaven! how does the *Pocu piu* and the *Poco meno* of the Italian artists,—the insensible more or less, determine the precise line of beauty in the sentence, as well as in the statue! How do the slight touches of the chisel, the pencil, the pen, the fiddle-stick, *et caetera*,—give the true swell, which gives the true pleasure!—O my countrymen,—be nice,—be cautious of your language,—and never, O! never let it be forgotten upon what small particles your eloquence and your fame depend.

—"My sister, mayhap," quoth my uncle Toby, "does not choose to let a man come so near her ****." Make this dash,—'tis an Aposiopesis.—Take the dash away, and write Backside,—'tis Bawdy.—Scratch Backside out, and put Covered-way in, 'tis a Metaphor, and, I dare say, as fortification ran so much in my uncle Toby's head, that if he had been left to have added one word to the sentence,—that word was it.

But whether that was the case or not the case;—or whether the snapping of my father's tobacco-pipe, so critically, happened through accident or anger, will be seen in due time.

Tho' my father was a good natural philosopher,—yet he was something of a moral philosopher too; for which reason, when his tobacco-pipe snapped short in the middle,—he had nothing to do, as such, but to have taken hold of the two pieces, and thrown them gently upon the back of the fire.—He did no such thing;—he threw them with all the violence in the world,—and, to give the action still more emphasis,—he started upon both his legs to do it.

This looked something like heat;—and the manner of his reply to what my uncle Toby was saying, proved it was so.

—"Not choose," quoth my father, (repeating my uncle Toby's words) "to let a man come so near her!—By Heaven, brother Toby! you would try the patience of Job;—and I think I have the plagues of one already without it."—"Why?—Where?—Wherein?—Wherefore?—Upon what account?" replied my uncle Toby, in the utmost astonishment.—"To think," said my father, "of a man living to your age, brother, and knowing so little about women!"—"I know nothing at all about them," replied my uncle Toby: "And I think," continued he, "that the shock I received the year after the demolition of Dunkirk, in my affair with widow Wadman,—which shock

you know I should not have received, but from my total ignorance of the sex,—has given me just cause to say, That I neither know nor do pretend to know anything about 'em or their concerns either."—"Methinks, brother," replied my father, "you might, at least, know so much as the right end of a woman from the wrong."

It is said in Aristotle's Master Piece, "That when a man doth think of any thing which is past,—he looketh down upon the ground;—but that when he thinketh of something that is to come, he looketh up towards the heavens."

My uncle Toby, I suppose, thought of neither, for he looked horizontally.—"Right end!" quoth my uncle Toby, muttering the two words low to himself, and fixing his two eyes insensibly as he muttered them, upon a small crevice, formed by a bad joint in the chimney-piece—"Right end of a woman!—I declare," quoth my uncle, "I know no more which it is than the man in the moon;—and if I was to think," continued my uncle Toby (keeping his eye still fixed upon the bad joint) "this month together, I am sure I should not be able to find it out."

"Then, brother Toby," replied my father, "I will tell you."

"Every thing in this world," continued my father (filling a fresh pipe)—"every thing in this world, my dear brother Toby, has two handles."—"Not always," quoth my uncle Toby.—"At least," replied my father, "every one has two hands,—which comes to the same thing.—Now, if a man was to sit down coolly, and consider within himself the make, the shape, the construction, come-at-ability, and convenience of all the parts which constitute the whole of that animal, called Woman, and compare them analogically"—"I never understood rightly the meaning of that word," quoth my uncle Toby.—

"Analogy," replied my father, "is the certain relation and agreement which different"—Here a devil of a rap at the door snapped my father's definition (like his tobacco-pipe) in two,—and, at the same time, crushed the head of as notable and curious a dissertation as ever was engendered in the womb of speculation;—it was some months before my father could get an opportunity to be safely delivered of it:—And, at this hour, it is a thing full as problematical as the subject of the dissertation itself,—(considering the confusion and distresses of our domestic misadventures, which are now coming thick one upon the back of another) whether I shall be able to find a place for it in the third volume or not.

It is about an hour and a half's tolerable good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, when Obadiah was ordered to saddle a horse, and go for Dr. Slop, the man-midwife;—so that no one can say, with reason, that I have not allowed Obadiah time enough, poetically speaking, and considering the

emergency too, both to go and come,—though, morally and truly speaking, the man perhaps has scarce had time to get on his boots.

If the hypercritic will go upon this, and is resolved after all to take a pendulum, and measure the true distance betwixt the ringing of the bell, and the rap at the door;—and, after finding it to be no more than two minutes, thirteen seconds, and three fifths,—should take upon him to insult over me for such a breach in the unity, or rather probability of time;—I would remind him, that the idea of duration, and of its simple modes, is got merely from the train and succession of our ideas,—and this is the true scholastic pendulum,—and by which, as a scholar, I will be tried in this matter,—abjuring and detesting the jurisdiction of all other pendulums whatever.

I would therefore desire him to consider that it is but poor eight miles from Shandy-Hall to Dr. Slop, the man-midwife's house,—and that whilst Obadiah has been going those said miles and back, I have brought my uncle Toby from Namur, quite across all Flanders, into England —That I have had him ill upon my hands near four years,—and have since travelled him and Corporal Trim in a chariot-and-four, a journey of near two hundred miles down into Yorkshire,—all which put together, must have prepared the reader's imagination for the entrance of Dr. Slop upon the stage,—as much, at least (I hope) as a dance, a song, or a concerto between the acts.

If my hypercritic is intractable, alleging, that two minutes and thirteen seconds are no more than two minutes and thirteen seconds,—when I have said all I can about them, and that this plea, though it might save me dramatically, will damn me biographically, rendering my book from this very moment, a professed Romance, which, before, was a book apocryphal:—If I am thus pressed—I then put an end to the whole objection and controversy about it all at once,—by acquainting him, that Obadiah had not got above three-score yards from the stable-yard before he met with Dr. Slop;—and indeed he gave a dirty proof that he had met with him, and was within an ace of giving a tragical one too.

Imagine to yourself a little squat, uncourtly figure of a Doctor Slop, of about four feet and a half perpendicular height, with a breadth of back, and a sesquipedality of belly, which might have done honour to a serjeant in the horse-guards.

Imagine such a one,—for such, I say, were the outlines of Dr. Slop's figure, coming slowly along, foot by foot, waddling thro' the dirt upon the vertebrae of a little diminutive pony, of a pretty colour—but of strength,—alack[1]—scarce able to have made an amble of it, under such a fardel, had the roads been in an ambling condition.—They were not.—Imagine to yourself, Obadiah mounted upon a strong monster of a coach-horse, pricked into a full gallop, and making all practicable speed the adverse way.

Pray, Sir, let me interest you a moment in this description.

Had Dr. Slop beheld Obadiah a mile off, posting in a narrow lane directly toward him, at that monstrous rate,—splashing and plunging like a devil thro' thick and thin, as he approached, would not such a phenomenon, with such a vortex of mud and water moving along with it, round its axis,—have been a subject of just apprehension to Dr. Slop in his situation, than the worst of Whiston's comets?—To say nothing of the Nucleus; that is, of Obadiah and the coach-horse.—In my idea, the vortex alone of 'em was enough to have involved and carried, if not the doctor, at least the doctor's pony, quite away with it. What then do you think must the terror and hydrophobia of Dr. Slop have been, when you read (which you are just going to do) that he was advancing thus warily along towards Shandy-Hall, and had approached to within sixty yards of it, and within five yards of a sudden turn, made by an acute angle of the garden-wall,—and in the dirtiest part of a dirty lane,—when Obadiah and his coach-horse turned the corner, rapid, furious,—pop,—full upon him!—Nothing, I think, in nature, can be supposed more terrible than such a rencounter,—so impromptu! so ill prepared to stand the shock of it as Dr. Slop was.

What could Dr. Slop do?—he crossed himself +—Pugh!—but the doctor, Sir, was a Papist.—No matter; he had better have kept hold of the pummel.—He had so;—nay, as it happened, he had better have done nothing at all, for in crossing himself he let go his whip,—and in attempting to save his whip betwixt his knee and his saddle's skirt, as it slipped, he lost his stirrup,—in losing which he lost his seat;—and in the multitude of all these losses (which, by the bye, shews what little advantage there is in crossing) the unfortunate doctor lost his presence of mind. So that without waiting for Obadiah's onset, he left his pony to its destiny, tumbling off it diagonally, something in the style and manner of a pack of wool, and without any other consequence from the fall, save that of being left (as it would have been) with the broadest part of him sunk about twelve inches deep in the mire.

Obadiah pulled off his cap twice to Dr. Slop,—once as he was falling,—and then again when he saw him seated.—Ill-timed complaisance;—had not the fellow better have stopped his horse, and got off and helped him?—Sir, he did all that his situation would allow; but the Momentum of the coach-horse was so great, that Obadiah could not do it all at once; he rode in a circle three times round Dr. Slop, before he could fully accomplish it any how;—and at the last, when he did stop his beast, 'twas done with such an explosion of mud, that Obadiah had better have been a league off. In short, never was a Dr. Slop so beluted, and so transubstantiated, since that affair came into fashion.

When Dr. Slop entered the back parlour, where my father and my uncle

Toby were discoursing upon the nature of women,—it was hard to determine whether Dr. Slop's figure, or Dr. Slop's presence, occasioned more surprise to them, for as the accident happened so near the house, as not to make it worth while for Obadiah to remount him,—Obadiah had led him in as he was, unwiped, unappointed, unannealed, with all his stains and blotches on him.—He stood like Hamlet's ghost, motionless and speechless, for a full minute and a half at the parlour-door (Obadiah still holding his hand) with all the majesty of mud. His hinder parts, upon which he had received his fall, totally besmeared,—*and in every other part of him, blotched over in* such a manner with Obadiah's explosion, that you would have sworn (without mental reservation) that every grain of it had taken effect.

Here was a fair opportunity for my uncle Toby to have triumphed over my father in his turn;—for no mortal, who had beheld Dr. Slop in that pickle, could have dissented from so much, at least, of my uncle Toby's opinion, "That mayhap his sister might not care to let such a Dr. Slop come so near her ****." But it was the *Argumentum ad hominem;* and if my uncle Toby was not very expert at it, you may think, he might not care to use it.—No; the reason was,—'twas not his nature to insult.

The Kitchen Grieves for the Death of Master Bobby

"My young master in London is dead!" said Obadiah.—

—A green satin night-gown of my mother's, which had been twice scoured, was the first idea which Obadiah's exclamation brought into Susannah's head.—Well might Locke write a chapter upon the imperfections of words.—"Then," quoth Susannah, "we must all go into mourning."—But note a second time· the word mourning, notwithstanding Susannah made use of it herself—failed also of doing its office, it excited not one single idea, tinged either with gray or black,—all was green.—The green satin night-gown hung there still.

—"O! 'twill be the death of my poor mistress," cried Susannah.—My mother's whole wardrobe followed.—What a procession! her red damask,—her orange tawney, her white and yellow lutestrings,—her brown taffeta, —her bone-laced caps, her bed-gowns, and comfortable under-petticoats.—Not a rag was left behind.—"No,—she will never look up again," said Susannah

We had a fat, foolish scullion—my father, I think, kept her for her simplicity;—she had been all autumn struggling with a dropsy.—"He is dead,"

said Obadiah, "he is certainly dead!"—"So am not I," said the foolish scullion.

"Here is sad news, Trim," cried Susannah, wiping her eyes as Trim stepped into the kitchen, "master Bobby is dead and buried"—the funeral was an interpolation of Susannah's—"we shall have all to go into mourning," said Susannah.

"I hope not," said Trim.—"You hope not!" cried Susannah earnestly.—The mourning ran not in Trim's head, whatever it did in Susannah's.—"I hope," said Trim, explaining himself, "I hope in God the news is not true."—"I heard the letter read with my own ears," answered Obadiah; "and we shall have a terrible piece of work of it in stubbing the Ox-moor."—"Oh! he's dead," said Susannah.—"As sure," said the scullion, "as I'm alive."

"I lament for him from my heart and my soul," said Trim, fetching a sigh. "Poor creature!—poor boy!—poor gentleman!"

"He was alive last Whitsuntide!" said the coachman.—"Whitsuntide! alas!" cried Trim, extending his right arm, and falling instantly into the same attitude in which he read the sermon, "What is Whitsuntide, Jonathan (for that was the coachman's name), "or Shrovetide, or any tide or time past, to this? Are we not here now," continued the corporal (striking the end of his stick perpendicularly upon the floor, so as to give an idea of health and stability)—"and are we not"—(dropping his hat upon the ground) "gone! in a moment!"—'Twas infinitely striking! Susannah burst into a flood of tears—We are not stocks and stones.—Jonathan, Obadiah, the cook-maid, all melted —The foolish fat scullion herself, who was scouring a fish-kettle upon her knees, was roused with it.—The whole kitchen crowded about the corporal.

—"Are we not here now"; continued the corporal, "and are we not"—(dropping the hat plumb upon the ground—and pausing before he pronounced the word)—"gone! in a moment?" The descent of the hat was as if a heavy lump of clay had been kneaded into the crown of it.—Nothing could have expressed the sentiment of mortality, of which it was the type and fore-runner, like it,—his hand seemed to vanish from under it,—it fell dead,—the corporal's eye fixed upon it, as upon a corpse,—and Susannah burst into a flood of tears.

Now—Ten thousand, and ten thousand times ten thousand (for matter and motion are infinite) are the ways by which a hat may be dropped upon the ground, without any effect.—Had he flung it, or thrown it, or cast it, or skimmed it, or squirted it, or let it slip or fall in any possible direction under heaven,—or in the best direction that could be given to it,—had he dropped it like a goose—like a puppy—like an ass—or in doing it, or even after he had done, had he looked like a fool—like a ninny—like a nincompoop—it had failed, and the effect upon the heart had been lost.

Ye who govern this mighty world and its mighty concerns with the engines of eloquence,—who heat it, and cool it, and melt it, and mollify it,—and then harden it again to your purpose—

Ye who wind and turn the passions with this great windlass, and, having done it, lead the owners of them, whither ye think meet—

Ye, lastly, who drive—and why not, Ye also who are driven, like turkeys *to market with a stick and a red clout—meditate—meditate*, I beseech you, upon Trim's hat.

Trim took his off the ground,—put it upon his head,—and then went on with his oration upon death, in manner and form following.

"To us, Jonathan, who know not what want or care is—who live here in the service of two of the best of masters—(bating in my own case his majesty King William the Third, whom I had the honour to serve both in Ireland and Flanders)—I *own it, that from Whitsuntide to within three weeks of Christmas*,—'tis not long—'*tis like nothing*;—but *to those, Jonathan, who know* what death is, and what havoc and destruction he can make, before a man can well wheel about—'tis like a whole age.—O Jonathan! 'twould make a good-natured man's heart bleed, to consider," continued the corporal (standing perpendicularly), "how low many a brave and upright fellow has been laid since that time!—And trust me, Susy," added the corporal, turning to Susannah, whose eyes were swimming in water, "before that time comes round again,—many a bright-eye will be dim."—Susannah placed it to the right side of the page—she wept—but she court'sied too —"Are we not," continued Trim, looking still at Susannah—"are we not like a flower of the field"—a tear of pride stole in betwixt every two tears of humiliation—else no tongue could have described Susannah's affliction—"is not all flesh grass?—'Tis clay,—'tis dirt."—They all looked directly at the scullion,—the scullion had just been scouring a fish-kettle.—It was not fair.—

"What is the finest face that ever man looked at!"—"I could hear Trim talk so for ever," cried Susannah,—"what is it!" (Susannah laid her hand upon Trim's shoulder)—"but corruption?"—Susannah took it off.

Now I love you for this—and 'tis this delicious mixture within you which makes you dear creatures what you are—and he who hates you for it—all I can say of the matter is—That he has either a pumpkin for his head—or a pippin for his heart,—and whenever he is dissected 'twill be found so.

Whether Susannah, by taking her hand too suddenly *from off the corporal's* shoulder (by the whisking about of her passions)—broke a little the chain of his reflections—

Or whether the corporal began to be suspicious, he had got into the doctor's quarters, and was talking more like the chaplain than himself—

Or whether -

Or whether—for in all such cases a man of invention and parts may with pleasure fill a couple of pages with suppositions—which of all these was the cause, let the curious physiologist, or the curious any body determine—'tis certain, at least, the corporal went on thus with his harangue.

"For my own part, I declare it, that out of doors, I value not death at all.—not this . . ." added the corporal, snapping his fingers,—but with an air which no one but the corporal could have given to the sentiment. "In battle, I value death not this . . . and let him not take me cowardly, like poor Joe Gibbons, in scouring his gun.—What is he? A pull of a trigger—a push of a bayonet an inch this way or that—makes the difference.—Look along the line—to the right—see! Jack's down! well,—'tis worth a regiment of horse to him.—No—'tis Dick. Then Jack's no worse.—Never mind which,—we pass on,—in hot pursuit the wound itself which brings him is not felt,—the best way is to stand up to him,—the man who flies, is in ten times more danger than the man who marches up into his jaws.—I've looked him," added the corporal, "an hundred times in the face,—and know what he is.—He's nothing, Obadiah, at all in the field."—"But he's very frightful in a house," quoth Obadiah.—"I never mind it myself," said Jonathan, "upon the coach-box."—"It must, in my opinion, be most natural in bed," replied Susannah.—"And could I escape him by creeping into the worst calf's skin that ever was made into a knapsack, I would do it there," said Trim, "but that is nature."

"Nature is nature," said Jonathan.—"And that is the reason," cried Susannah, "I so much pity my mistress —She will never get the better of it." —"Now I pity the captain the most of any one in the family," answered Trim. "Madam will get ease of heart in weeping,—and the Squire in talking about it,—but my poor master will keep it all in silence to himself.—I shall hear him sigh in his bed for a whole month together, as he did for lieutenant Le Fever.—'An' please your honour, do not sigh so piteously,' I would say to him as I laid beside him. 'I cannot help it, Trim,' my master would say,—' 'tis so melancholy an accident—I cannot get it off my heart.'—'Your honour fears not death yourself.'—'I hope, Trim, I fear nothing,' he would say, 'but the doing a wrong thing.—Well,' he would add, 'whatever betides, I will take care of Le Fever's boy.'—And with that, like a quieting draught, his honour would fall asleep."

"I like to hear Trim's stories about the captain," said Susannah.—"He is a kindly-hearted gentleman," said Obadiah, "as ever lived."—"Aye, and as brave a one too," said the corporal, "as ever stept before a platoon.—There never was a better officer in the king's army,—or a better man in God's world; for he would march up to the mouth of a cannon, though he saw the lighted match at the very touch-hole,—and yet, for all that, he has a heart as soft as a child for other people.—He would not hurt a chicken."—"I

would sooner," quoth Jonathan, "drive such a gentleman for seven pounds a year—than some for eight."—"Thank thee, Jonathan! for thy twenty shillings,—as much, Jonathan," said the corporal, shaking him by the hand, "as if thou hadst put the money into my own pocket.—I would serve him to the day of my death out of love. He is a friend and a brother to me,—and could I be sure my poor brother Tom was dead," continued the corporal, taking out his handkerchief, "was I worth ten thousand pounds, I would leave every shilling of it to the captain." Trim could not refrain from tears at this testamentary proof he gave of his affection to his master.—The whole kitchen was affected.

SHERIDAN PUTS NEW STONES IN OLD SETTINGS



IN SHERIDAN *the artificial comedy of manners that had flourished in England since the Restoration ends in a glorious blaze like some final display of fireworks. Without Congreve's exquisite shimmer of light or Wycherly's hard power, Sheridan borrows successfully and boldly from both, almost equals them in wit, and excels both in dramatic construction. In* The School for Scandal *Joseph Surface resembles Maskwell, in Congreve's* Double-Dealer, *and his brother Charles has traits of Manly and Mirabell, while Lady Teazle, the country-bred wife of the complaisant Sir Peter, is a more modish and modest variation on Margery Pinchwife.*

Despite its verve and clever rendering of society tittle-tattle, despite even the adroit management of the famous screen scene, The School for Scandal *is entirely derivative, and cannot compare for originality or real observation with* The Rivals, *Sheridan's success of two years before. To be sure, the earlier play has its imitative aspects too. Sir Lucius O'Trigger, the fire-eating Irish adventurer, is a stock figure; and Bob Acres, the timid booby squire, goes back to the blustering cowards of Plautus. But even here Sheridan has refurbished old ideas with new and farcical humours, as in Acres' ingeniously schematic profanity. "The oath," he explains, "should*

be an echo to the sense; and this we call the oath referential." *When he has been in haste—"Odds whips and wheels!" he bustles in, "I've traveled like a comet." In good humor—"Merry, odds crickets!" Listening to music —"Odds minims and crotchets!" Or, resolved on a duel, a dangerous dog— "Odds triggers and flints!"*

There is much lively observation in the play. Lydia Languish is modeled on those young ladies of the day who devoured romantic novels, swooning with sympathy and longing to become involved themselves in just such thrilling dilemmas. Faulkland, full of Wertherian gloom, makes himself equally miserable when separated from his mistress by imagining her ill and lonely or by learning she is lively and in good health. No wonder Miss Languish would rather elope surreptitiously with the poor Ensign Beverley than marry the same young man with a fortune and the approval of her guardian, and that Faulkland torments his faithful and much-enduring Julia to the point where she can bear with him no longer!

The whole plot of Captain Absolute's alternate appearances as himself and Ensign Beverley is worked out with gorgeous foolery, becoming, as it should, more and more involved, and laying progressively greater demands on the hero's ingenuity to wriggle out of the imbroglio he has gotten himself into. His increasingly desperate dodges and his juggling of the two personalities he has assumed reach a peak of delirious double-dealing in the scene where he assures Lydia he has passed himself off on Mrs Malaprop as his own rival, the hated Absolute.

But Mrs. Malaprop is, of course, the great triumph of comic invention in the play. In a way, she represents the arrival of the middle class in the comedy of manners. The earlier comic writers had been full of aristocratic vulgarians, old harridans insolent with the low manners of high birth, but Mrs. Malaprop is a self-made vulgarian whose ignorant pretensions to erudition have simply piled absurdity upon ill-breeding. She is a more wildly ridiculous forerunner of Thackeray's ignorant Indian nabobs and gross merchants a century later. And yet how irresistible and ingratiating she is, this self-important, cheap, grotesque, and gullible old fraud! "Illiterate him, I say," she orders Lydia, "quite from your memory." Laying down the law on education, she insists that a girl should learn to "reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying." Or again, mysteriously, she describes Lydia's obstinacy "as headstrong as an allegory on the Nile." She continues to fascinate even when we know by heart every blunder in that marvelous flow of misapplied volubility.

THE RIVALS

⁂ The play was first produced in 1775. The scenes given here are from Act I, Scene 2, Act II, Scene 1, and Act III, Scene 3 ⁂

Sir Anthony Absolute and Mrs. Malaprop Consider the Handling of the Young

The scene is a dressing room in Mrs. Malaprop's house. Lydia Languish and Julia are discovered. Enter Lucy, the maid, in a hurry

LUCY. O ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

LYDIA. They'll not come here—Lucy, do you watch. *Exit Lucy*

JULIA. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Re-enter Lucy

LUCY. O Lud! ma'am, they are both coming upstairs.

LYDIA. Well, I'll not detain you, coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia. I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There, through my room you'll find another staircase.

JULIA. Adieu! *Embraces Lydia, and exit*

LYDIA. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick!—Fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet—throw *Roderick Random* into the closet—put *The Innocent Adultery* into *The Whole Duty of Man*—thrust *Lord Aimworth* under the sofa—cram *Ovid* behind the bolster—there—put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket—so, so—now lay *Mrs. Chapone* in sight, and leave *Fordyce's Sermons* open on the table.

LUCY. O burn it, ma'am! the hair-dresser has torn away as far as *Proper Pride*.

LYDIA. Never mind—open at *Sobriety*.—Fling me *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*. Now for 'em. *Exit Lucy*

Enter Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony Absolute

MRS. MALAPROP. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

LYDIA. Madam, I thought you once—

MRS. MALAPROP. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will *promise to forget this fellow—to* illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

LYDIA. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

MRS. MALAPROP. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

SIR ANTHONY. Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not!—ay, this comes of her reading!

LYDIA. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

MRS. MALAPROP. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter, *you know I have proof controvertible of it.—But tell me, will you promise* to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

LYDIA. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

MRS. MALAPROP. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman, and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

LYDIA. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words

MRS. MALAPROP. Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

LYDIA. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse. *Exit*

MRS. MALAPROP. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

SIR ANTHONY. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

MRS. MALAPROP. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

SIR ANTHONY. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

MRS. MALAPROP. Those are vile places, indeed!

SIR ANTHONY. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!—and depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

MRS. MALAPROP. Fy, fy, Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

SIR ANTHONY. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know?

MRS. MALAPROP. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning, I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to let her learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; —and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries,—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you, though I must confess that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

MRS. MALAPROP. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

MRS. MALAPROP. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

SIR ANTHONY. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas "Jack do

this";—if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

MRS. MALAPROP. Ah, and the properest way, o' my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations;—and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

SIR ANTHONY. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl.—Take my advice—keep a tight hand, if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

A Tender Father Deals with a Dutiful Son

The scene is Captain Absolute's lodgings. Fag, his valet, has just announced his father's arrival from the country. Enter Sir Anthony Absolute

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I am delighted to see you here, looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

SIR ANTHONY. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

ABSOLUTE. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

ABSOLUTE. Pardon, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

SIR ANTHONY. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well, then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

ABSOLUTE. Sir, you are very good.

SIR ANTHONY. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

ABSOLUTE. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

SIR ANTHONY. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention—and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

ABSOLUTE. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude, I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

SIR ANTHONY. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

ABSOLUTE. My wife, sir!

SIR ANTHONY. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

ABSOLUTE. A wife, sir, did you say?

SIR ANTHONY. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

ABSOLUTE. Not a word of her, sir.

SIR ANTHONY. Odd so!—I mus'n't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

ABSOLUTE. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

SIR ANTHONY. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

ABSOLUTE. I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

SIR ANTHONY. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

ABSOLUTE. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, sir, who is the lady?

SIR ANTHONY. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

ABSOLUTE. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

SIR ANTHONY. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

ABSOLUTE. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

SIR ANTHONY. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

ABSOLUTE. But my vows are pledged to her.

SIR ANTHONY. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

ABSOLUTE. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

SIR ANTHONY. Hark'ee, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance

itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I must repeat—in this I cannot obey you

SIR ANTHONY. Now damn me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

ABSOLUTE. Nay, sir, but hear me.

SIR ANTHONY. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——

ABSOLUTE. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to——

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose. she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

ABSOLUTE. This is reason and moderation indeed!

SIR ANTHONY. *None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, Jackanapes!*

ABSOLUTE. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

SIR ANTHONY. 'Tis false, sir. I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

SIR ANTHONY. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please!—It won't do with me, I promise you.

ABSOLUTE. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

SIR ANTHONY. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do

ABSOLUTE. Nay, sir, upon my word——

SIR ANTHONY. So you will fly out! can't you be cool like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again! don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition!—Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do everything on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you —If not, zounds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same *light with me; but get an* atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission, I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me! if ever I call you Jack again! *Exit Sir Anthony*

Beverley and Absolute Are Beside Themselves

The scene is a room in Mrs. Malaprop's lodgings
Mrs. Malaprop, with a letter in her hand, and Captain Absolute

MRS. MALAPROP. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation, but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

ABSOLUTE. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop, of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated —(*They sit.*) Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman!—few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman.—Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower of beauty!

ABSOLUTE. It is but too true, indeed, ma'am;—yet I fear our ladies should share the blame—they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden-trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of more specious blossom—Few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding.—He is the very pine-apple of politeness!—You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly strolling, eaves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows anything of.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

MRS. MALAPROP. You are very good and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have done everything in my power since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

ABSOLUTE. It must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree.—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, the devil; my last note. *Aside*

MRS. MALAPROP. Ay, here it is.

ABSOLUTE. Ay, my note indeed! Oh, the little traitress Lucy. *Aside*

MRS. MALAPROP. There, perhaps you may know the writing.

Gives him the letter

ABSOLUTE. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before——

MRS. MALAPROP. Nay, but read it, captain.

ABSOLUTE. (*Reads*) *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!*—Very tender, indeed!

MRS. MALAPROP. Tender, ay, and profane too, o' my conscience.

ABSOLUTE. (*Reads*) *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival*——

MRS. MALAPROP. That's you, sir.

ABSOLUTE. (*Reads*) *Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman and a man of honour.*—Well, that's handsome enough.

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

ABSOLUTE. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

ABSOLUTE. (*Reads*) *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you.*—Who can he mean by that?

MRS. MALAPROP. Me, sir!—me!—he means me!—There—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

ABSOLUTE. Impudent scoundrel!—(*Reads*) *it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand*——

MRS. MALAPROP. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

ABSOLUTE. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—(*Reads*) *same ridiculous vanity*——

MRS. MALAPROP. You need not read it again, sir.

ABSOLUTE. I beg pardon, ma'am.—(*Reads*) *does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*—an impudent coxcomb!—*so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview.*—Was ever such assurance!

MRS. MALAPROP. Did you ever hear anything like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he?—Yes, yes! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors;—we'll try who can plot best!

ABSOLUTE. So we will, ma'am—so we will! Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha!—Well, but, Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

MRS. MALAPROP. I am delighted with the scheme; never was anything better perpetrated!

ABSOLUTE. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

ABSOLUTE. O Lord! she won't mind me—only tell her Beverley——

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir!

ABSOLUTE. Gently, good tongue. *Aside*

MRS. MALAPROP. What did you say of Beverley?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

MRS. MALAPROP. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—(*Calling*) He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing, ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous.

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. MALAPROP. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

ABSOLUTE. As you please, madam.

MRS. MALAPROP. For the present, captain, your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see—elude my vigilance; yes, yes; ha! ha! ha! *Exit*

ABSOLUTE. Ha! ha! ha! one would think now that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures

Enter Lydia

LYDIA. What a scene am I now to go through! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have

appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival, suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too,—but oh, how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't begin—truly he seems a very negligent wooer!—quite at his ease, upon my word! I'll speak first —Mr. Absolute.

ABSOLUTE. Ma'am. *Turns round*

LYDIA. O heavens! Beverley!

ABSOLUTE. Hush;—hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

LYDIA. I am so astonished; and so terrified and so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

ABSOLUTE. Briefly, I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

LYDIA. O charming! And she really takes you for young Absolute.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, she's convinced of it.

LYDIA. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is overreached!

ABSOLUTE. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur; then let me conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

LYDIA. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness! Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia,—for well you know it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

LYDIA. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him! *Aside*

ABSOLUTE. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness, abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there. Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me but here—*(Embracing her)* If she holds out now, the devil is in it! *Aside*

LYDIA. Now could I fly with him to the antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis. *Aside*

Re-enter Mrs. Malaprop, listening

MRS. MALAPROP. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. *Aside*

ABSOLUTE. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

MRS. MALAPROP. —Warmth abated!—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose. *Aside*

LYDIA. No—nor ever can while I have life.

MRS. MALAPROP. An ill-tempered little devil! She'll be in a passion all her life—will she? *Aside*

LYDIA. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

MRS. MALAPROP. Very dutiful, upon my word! *Aside*

LYDIA. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

MRS. MALAPROP. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this is to his face. *Aside*

ABSOLUTE. Thus then let me enforce my suit. *Kneeling*

MRS. MALAPROP. (*Aside*) Ay, poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—(*Coming forward*) Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, confound her vigilance! *Aside*

MRS. MALAPROP. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

ABSOLUTE. (*Aside*) So all's safe, I find.—(*Aloud*) I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

LYDIA. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

LYDIA. No, madam—I did not.

MRS. MALAPROP. Good heavens! what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley, that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

LYDIA. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley——

MRS. MALAPROP. Hold!—hold, Assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

ABSOLUTE. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

MRS. MALAPROP. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come

with me, miss—Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

ABSOLUTE. I shall, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

LYDIA. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

MRS. MALAPROP. Hussy! I'll choke the word in your throat!—come along—come along.

Exeunt severally; Captain Absolute kissing his hand to Lydia—Mrs. Malaprop stopping her from speaking.

SCOURGE OF HYPOCRITES



ROBERT BURNS *ranks among the great poets of democracy. He glorifies the common man, not by sentimentalizing him into a figure of rude nobility or rustic quaintness, but simply by portraying him as a human being. The peasant for Burns, who was himself a peasant, is not a feudal retainer or a comic character in a smock, neither is he a touchstone of virtue and wisdom distilling truth from communion with hills and trees He breaks his back over a rocky soil, he fuddles his wits with Scotch drink in the tavern, he petrifies his heart with Scotch religion in the kirk, he clings to his hearth and weans. So Burns saw him rather than as some reservoir of natural goodness. His sympathy was born not of romantic idealism but of the grand elemental warmth with which he regarded all life—the same warmth which made it hard for him to believe that even the Devil would torture humanity if a grim Scotch Deity did not force him to it:*

> *Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,*
> *An' let poor damnèd bodies be;*
> *I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,*
> *E'en to a deil,*
> *To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,*
> *An' hear us squeal.*

But if even "auld Cloots" had a heart, there were plenty of human beings, Burns knew, who had not. And his sympathies, which embraced dogs, daisies, mice, and lice, did not extend to them. The cruelty that will plunge its enemy in the fire, the intolerance that will crucify for a difference of belief, the pride that will erect its beliefs into dogmas, for these and for these alone Burns has no tolerance. He laughs scornfully at all purse-proud, birth-proud, brain-proud snobbery—"yon birkie ca'd a lord" and the "dull conceited hashes" who "confuse their brains in college classes." "The rank is but the guinea's stamp," he declares; "the man's the gowd for a' that." He pays ironical respects to nagging wives

> *Ye gentle dames, it gars me greet*
> *How monie lengthened sage advices*
> *The husband frae the wife despises.*

Self-righteous superiority everywhere he detests and despises.

For the morally censorious, however, he reserved a special and violent detestation. The dour piety that tyrannized over the kirk, that made a desert and called it the peace of God, that had no doubts of its own righteousness and the darkest suspicions of its neighbors' sins—all the bleak pharisaical bitternesses and jealousies that set themselves up in judgment and damned every time—Burns abominated with blazing fury He would hear no defense for the Unco Guid, *or* Rigidly Righteous. *at the worst they were moral hypocrites whose seeming purity was merely lack of opportunity or their "better art o' hidin'," at the best poor thin-blooded things whose "castigated pulse" never knew the hot tides that gallop through the veins of others To those moral dragons, the* Good Women, *"high, exalted virtuous Dames, Tied up in godly laces," he asks suggestively what they would do if they only had a lover, and cruelly adds:*

> *But, let me whisper i' your lug,*
> *Ye're aiblins nae temptation.*

So it is that Burns, who can pity an uprooted flower and feel the panic thumping through the heart of a fieldmouse, whose tenderness embraces the world like the warmth of a summer day, drips taunts and distils venom whenever he thinks of the overvirtuous. Holy Willie's Prayer *is only the most vivid and violent and brilliant of these attacks. The dramatic monologue hoists* Holy Willie *with his own petard, all unawares, just by talking*

to his Calvinistic God, he strips himself morally naked. With every word he paints himself blacker and blacker, adding exultation in physical cruelty to spiritual pride, hidden sensuality to public zeal, envy and vindictiveness to desire for worldly power. Despicably mean and contemptible, he makes himself irresistibly ludicrous as well; and the reader rejoices with Burns in the poetic justice of making the hypocrite rub gall in his own wounds.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

*** The poem was originally composed in 1785 ***

A Good Christian Communes with His God

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve most just damnation,
For broken laws,
Sax thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lakes,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chained to their stakes;

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there and dancin' here,
Wi' great an' sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must
At times I'm fashed wi' fleshy lust;
An' sometimes too, in warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled in sin.

O Lord! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may it ne'er be a livin' plague
To my dishonor!
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times, I trow;
But, Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
That he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

An' when we chastened him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us,
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes

Lord, hear my earnest cry an' prayer,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr,
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
Upo' their heads,
Lord, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongued Aiken,
My very heart and soul are quakin',
To think how we stood sweatin', shakin',
An' filled wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin' lips and snakin',
Held up his head

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him;
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their prayer;
But, for thy people's sake, destroy them,
And dinna spare

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine
Excelled by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

ROBERT BAGE: SATIRIC WIT AND THE NOBLE SAVAGE



BAGE BELONGS *among the noble company of Tom Paine and William Godwin and John Stuart Mill: the patriots of humanity and lovers of mankind. Like them, he rebelled generously against oppression and inequality, and the social superstitions that supported them. Like Mill, he was something of an intellectual prodigy, learned Latin at the age of seven, taught himself French and Italian, began studying the higher mathematics for amusement in his thirties. Like Paine and Godwin, he was strongly influenced by the French Revolution and regarded as a dangerous radical by conservatives who felt the sting of his satire—despite the fact that Bage himself, a prosperous paper manufacturer at Elford, was inclined to chortle mildly at doctrinaire radicalism. Like all three, he was a skeptic, laying no stress on revelation, "barely a Christian," some of his contemporaries said, though he retained an affection for the Quaker faith in which he had been*

brought up. But his real religion was that warm conviction in the power of the mind over men's baser passions which enthusiastic reformers in his age called "reason."

Beyond all this, during the last twenty years of his life he was a satiric novelist who little deserves the oblivion that has fallen upon him More than any other writer of the eighteenth century he combined in the didactic novel intellectual power and liveliness of invention with vivid and lifelike character portrayal. Voltaire has power and liveliness· he is as powerful as a machine-gun pouring bullets into a target, and as lively as a roller-coaster roaring around the curve of the globe; but his characters exist only to let out appropriate yells as the story hurtles them down some terrifying drop Godwin's propaganda mystery-thriller Caleb Williams *is almost feverishly exciting; but Falkland, the Byronic hero-villain, is a creation out of Gothic romance, and Caleb is a combination of Blifil and a super-Henry-Jamesian snoop Bage has a rich sense of human personality, he has sparkling humor, and he has lofty and liberal sentiments.*

Hermsprong, or Man As He Is Not, *his last book, is his chef-d'oeuvre Hermsprong, the hero, is a fusion of the Noble Savage and the Missing Heir. He was brought up among the Red Indians of North America by a father disillusioned with the corruptions of civilization, and his judgments stand for those reason and nature would advance undistorted by artifice or self-interest. Rightfully entitled to the peerage and estates held by the polished and unscrupulous Lord Grondale, he has returned to England undecided whether even to reveal his identity. He is neither a smoker nor a winedrinker, and he refuses, although as courteously as he can, to tell the usual polite lies of social intercourse. He is skeptical of miraculous revelation, and hostile to ecclesiastical pretensions. With a rather low opinion of the virtues and abilities of women as they have been degraded by subserviency to the masculine sex, he believes in giving women legal and educational equality with men. He is antagonistic to social privilege and the domination of government by a favored class. He regards generosity and benevolence much less as virtues than as rational human duties.*

All this might make Hermsprong sound dangerously like a prig and moral bore. In fact he is neither. He tempers his child-of-nature honesty with playful courtliness when he admits to the ladies that he finds them somewhat inferior to angels. His arguments with officious or overbearing persons like Dr. Blick and Lord Grondale are Socratically adroit and sharpened with just enough healthy resentment of their bullying bad

manners to enrage them, tickle his readers, and make him human A sort of Shavian hero strayed in time, this son of the woods has acquired in the course of his European travels a good deal of the eighteenth-century art of graceful phrase and cutting censure. In verbal encounter he gives all the delight of a good debate.

That delight, however, Bage provides abundantly throughout the book, and from a little constellation of other characters besides Hermsprong. His banker, the wealthy self-made merchant Mr. Sumelin, is a master of dry irony and brief acidulous repartee. Standing aside from the contentions of his household, dropping now and then a witty comment on the torrent of his wife's complaints, he is both sharper and less elaborately drawn than Jane Austen's Mr. Bennet, but a more businesslike and incisive version of that disillusioned man. And if Mr. Sumelin reminds us of Mr. Bennet, the captivating Maria Fluart reminds us of Jane Austen's heroine, Elizabeth Bennet herself. How archly Miss Fluart rallies Lord Grondale, laughing at him to his face and yet consciously feeding "the ardor of his imagination" with the very words in which she warns him that his suit is hopeless—quite as Elizabeth might have done with Darcy had she despised him rather than disliked him and been just a little more flippant. But indeed both Elizabeth Bennet and Maria Fluart are sisters of Shakespeare's Beatrice and Congreve's Millamant. It is not the least of Bage's triumphs that he leads our thoughts to such enchanting company.

HERMSPRONG

*** *Hermsprong* was published in 1796 The extracts given here are from Volume I, Chapter 12, and Volume II, Chapter 12 ***

Dr. Blick Finds He Has Caught a Tartar

DR. BLICK was announced by the landlord at his entrance into the parlor.

Hermsprong had almost begun sternly to say, "By what right, Sir, do you introduce a stranger to a select company without leave?" when the cast-down humble look of poor Woodcock disarmed his anger, and made him forebear. He contented himself, however, with slightly rising, and sitting down again. Glen was equally unpolite, but Tunny's bustling assiduity made it the less observable.

When the Doctor was accommodated with the easy chair, his punch, and a pipe, and no one seeming inclined to speak, "I beg," says the Doctor, "I may not interrupt the conversation."

Still silence prevailing, Mr. Tunny says, "Why, Doctor, I happened to swear a little, and Mr. Woodcock reproved me; whereas, if he had been chaplain to a regiment, he would have known that a soldier must swear; I don't see, for my part, how the service can be carried on without it"

"I do not see why," said the Curate.

"Sir, I will tell you," replied the Doctor, "you cannot suppose that a clergyman can be an advocate for swearing in general, but I have heard sensible officers, both in the sea and land service, say that it supports a certain energy, and if soldiers and sailors were forbidden it, their courage would droop."

"There now," cried Tunny with exultation, "did I not tell you? Doctor Blick has seen life. One always expects sensible observations from gentlemen that have seen life. I served under Marshal Keith, and know a thing or two Now, here is Mr. Hermsprong has been supposing that I must be sorry that I did not fall in the field of honor with Marshal Keith, but he is confoundedly mistaken."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "it is a mistake which no man could have fallen into, who has studied human nature to any purpose. The love of life is so strong that scarcely any calamity can weaken it."

"No," says Hermsprong; "nor in *very* civilized countries, any affection-not even the love of heaven."

"I have been told," said Glen, "that savages are taught, and really learn to despise it."

"Sir," says the Doctor, "man cannot despise it."

"I believe," Mr. Hermsprong said, "despise is not the proper term. A savage put to his choice will, in all common situations, prefer life; but without dreading death with the timidity of nations who are taught from infancy to fear it."

"Sir," replied Doctor Blick, "you may say what you please of savages, it is all nonsense. Man must fear death. It is a lesson of nature. You teach in vain, if you teach lessons contrary to nature."

"Pray, Sir," asked Hermsprong, "what is nature?"

"Ask a schoolboy, Sir," said the Doctor.

"It is not your rudeness," replied Hermsprong, "your imposing tone, nor airs of superior knowledge, that shall deter me from telling you, Sir, that even Doctors may make superficial distinctions. Man cannot be taught anything contrary to nature. However he acts, he must act by nature's laws, howsoever he thinks, he must think by nature's laws."

"Sir," says the Doctor, "if I have rudeness, you have presumption. Let me ask you a simple question. Is a fever natural?"

"Most certainly. Its whole process is according to the immutable laws of nature."

"Very true; in an enlarged sense; but by natural we mean only the common course of things."

"What philosopher calls earthquakes and storms unnatural?"

"Well, Sir, but this does not prove that man can get above the fear of death."

"Will you accept as proof the bravery of our sailors in the hour of battle?"

"No, Sir."

"Suicide, at least, must be proof complete."

"No, Sir; it is lunacy."

"Alas! half the actions of our lives are lunacies, I think; and none more than those we reason ourselves into. War is lunacy, and we call in all the powers of reason to prove it wisdom. Perhaps, the fear of death itself is a lunacy; for to a reflecting mind, at least, death is not an evil."

"Death not an evil!" says the Doctor, in a tone of surprise.

"Zounds, Sir! death not an evil!" cries Tunny.

"I should suppose not," Mr. Hermsprong answered; "death is privation of sense. Can any evil happen to that stone?"

This appeared to the Doctor to border on infidelity; a thing so execrable,

root and branch, that it ought to be burnt out of the world by fire and faggot.

"Sir," said he, "are you an Atheist? Death, privation of sensation! No, Sir; it is enlargement of sensation. It is renovation—it is the gate of life—it is a passport to eternal joys."

"Then surely," said Hermsprong, "it is not an evil."

Now the good Doctor was vexed at this; he had like to have broke his pipe; and so much the more vexed, as the fool of a landlord cried out, "But zounds! Doctor, he has flanked you."

His anger fell on poor Tunny, whom he rebuked severely, and then returned with fresh vigor to the contest.

"It must be supposed I must mean what I last said only for the good. To the wicked, death surely is an evil."

"Let Tom Tunny look to that," said Hermsprong gaily.

"Then, Sir, you think yourself a man without sin?"

"Syllogistically, all men are sinners. All men who do not do what the church requires are sinners. But all men do not do what the church requires Then, all men are sinners."

"Sir, you have quick parts, but all the parts in the world, without faith, will not ensure salvation."

"Oh! if it depends upon faith, I have no reason to despair. At Lisbon I believed all holy catholic things; at Rome I believed in the infallibility of the tiara; and in England I believe in church and king, the first article of faith; which, if a man do not do, he cannot be saved."

"Mr. Hermsprong—that is your name, I think—religion is not a jest."

"Well, Doctor, dispute is disagreeable; altercation pitiful. It is easy on this subject to give offense by innocent or careless expressions. I desire to give no offense, therefore beg leave to decline the subject."

"Young gentleman, I must not let you off so. It is my duty to put you right if I find you wrong. I suspect you have imbibed some of the abominable doctrines of the French philosophers; some heretical tenets, which will plunge you into the bottomless pit."

The Doctor now began to drink off his glasses of punch very quick, and as he had preached against infidelity but the last sabbath, he remembered much of the sermon, and meeting with no interruption from the company, who preserved a profound silence, he preached it over again with much animation.

When he had finished, Mr. Hermsprong thanked him for the trouble he had taken, and drank his health.

"But," said the Doctor, "you say nothing to my discourse; I hope I have not preached in vain."

"In vain, I fear, to Tom Tunny here."

The Doctor looked, and, lo! the man was asleep. He was presently awaked, and received a sharp reprimand.

"Doctor," says the landlord, "I always thought a pulpit a fitter place to preach in than an alehouse; and that a man must fall asleep when he cannot keep himself awake. It is not orthodox here, to preach over our liquor. Gentlemen, my service to you! Solomon said there was a time for all things; a time to preach, and a time to let it alone; and I am sure there is no better time to let it alone than when good company meet together to be merry."

"You are beneath my notice," said the Doctor, with great dignity, "but for this young gentleman—"

"I request, Sir, you will do me the favor to consider me as beneath your notice also," said Hermsprong.

"I don't like obstinacy in a young man. You was the person who had the good luck to do a piece of service to Miss Campinet?"

No answer.

"That," continues the Doctor, "was a fortunate event for the young lady, and might have been so to you, had you thought proper to treat his Lordship with proper respect."

"Sir, I have no respect for his Lordship."

"No, young man, nor for anybody else, I think."

"I pay it, Sir, where I owe it."

"The man will have something to do who sets himself the task of correcting your errors."

"It is too much even for a Doctor of Divinity. I ought to be grateful, however, for the intention; and to return the obligation where I can. You yourself, Sir, seem to have one small error. I recommend officiousness to your correction."

The Doctor's face grew red with anger. In a raised tone he said, "Let me tell you, young man—"

"Stop, Sir," said Hermsprong, rising; "by what right do you presume to speak to me with the tone of a master? I owe you no obedience; and despise you for your tyrannical and contentious spirit. Mr. Tunny, let another room be prepared for Mr. Glen and me. Mr. Woodcock, when the Doctor chooses to leave a place where he had no right to intrude, we shall be glad of your company."

Lord Grondale Lays His Rank, His Person, and His Fortune at Miss Fluart's Feet

Lord Grondale had begun to long for a few of Miss Fluart's sugared sweets, and Miss Fluart to wish he would. This young lady was strolling the pleasure grounds alone; Miss Campinet having determined that evening to write to Mrs. Garnet—a thing she had attempted every day since her father's prohibition, but in which she had not yet succeeded to her mind. A few yards from the pavilion, turning a walk, Miss Fluart almost ran against Lord Grondale. The good Peer said, with a tone of good nature, "Have I the pleasure to see Miss Fluart here, and alone?"

"Caroline is indolent," Miss Fluart answered, "she chose the zephyrs of her own apartment, rather than the zephyrs of your Lordship's groves. Oh dear!" she continued, "now I think of it, I have long had a desire to take a peep into your Lordship's pavilion, where you have never yet invited me."

"I invite you now, then," said Lord Grondale, hobbling up the steps and unlocking the door.

"I hear," says she, "it is a little palace of paintings."

The first object which struck her view was herself, her beauteous self, many times multiplied. This was fascinating, no doubt, but she got rid of it as soon as she could, and threw her eye on a lovely piece, representing Iachimo taking notes of the mole cinque-spotted on the beauteous bosom of Imogen The next was Atalanta, straining to recover the ground she had lost by the golden apples, her bosom bare, her zone unloosed, her garments streaming with the wind From the four following pieces, the pavilion might, not improperly, have been denominated the Temple of Venus. The first gave the goddess rising from the sea. The second, asleep, a copy of Titian. The third, accompanied with Juno and Minerva, appealing to Paris. The fourth, in Vulcan's net with Mars.

However capital these might be, they were such as ladies are not accustomed to admire in the presence of gentlemen.There was, however, a superb sofa, on which a lady might sit down with all possible propriety Miss Fluart did sit down; but the prospect from thence rather increased than diminished a little matter of confusion which she felt on the view of the company she seemed to have got into.

She was rising to leave the pavilion, when his Lordship, in the most gallant possible manner, claimed a fine, due, he said, by the custom of the manor, from every lady who honored that sofa by sitting upon it. His Lordship meant simply a kiss, which I believe he would have taken respectfully

enough, had Miss Fluart been passive; but, I know not why, the lady seemed to feel an alarm, for which probably she had no reason; and was intent only on running away, whilst his Lordship was intent only upon seizing his forfeit. A fine muslin apron was ill-treated upon this occasion; a handkerchief was ruffled, and some beautiful hair had strayed from its confinement, and wantoned upon its owner's polished neck. She got away, however, from this palace of painting and its dangerous sofa.

"Upon my word, my dear Miss Fluart," said his Lordship, getting down after her as fast as he was able, "you are quite a prude today. I thought you superior to the nonsense of your sex, the making such a rout about a kiss."

"A kiss! Lord bless me," said Miss Fluart, "I thought, from the company your Lordship had brought me into, and the mode of your attack, you had wanted to undress me."

Lord Grondale burst into an immoderate laugh, and declared it was the drollest idea in the world. Miss Fluart laughed too, and stopped to hear his Lordship's exculpation; which she accepted without much difficulty, having a favor to ask, that could scarcely be granted except in his Lordship's very best humor.

Whether a kiss refused is more a promoter of love than a kiss granted, or whether there is anything inflammatory in pulling a young lady's clothes to pieces, it is certain Lord Grondale now found himself very seriously in love.

After they had walked together a little time, his Lordship said, "My dear Miss Fluart, you are the most charming, the most irresistible girl in the universe. In pity to myself, I must avoid you, unless—unless I could learn to behold you with less affection, or inspire you with more."

"Oh dear!" returned Miss Fluart; "why your Lordship's love fit is come on again. I thought it had been gone for good. But I hope, as it has a trick of coming and going, it will not incommode your Lordship much."

"Miss Fluart," said the Peer gravely, "I could wish to be serious on a serious occasion.—Can you, a few minutes?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, upon a serious occasion. But I thought love had been a light-hearted airy thing, all joy and sport. If it is so solemn, I shall not at all like it."

"Should you, Miss Fluart, if I should offer to lay my rank, my title, my person, and fortune at your feet—should you think it worth a serious consideration?"

"Why, my Lord, these are very serious things, no doubt; one should like to tread upon some of them. But, indeed, my Lord, you would lose too much, if I should accept your rash offer. How can your Lordship expect

greater felicity than with a person of Mrs. Stone's merit? in whom you have one of the best of wives, without a wife's odious prerogative."

"You suppose, then, I have improper connections with this lady?"

"I did not say anything about improper connections, my Lord, they may be very proper, for anything I know, for your Lordship."

"That Mrs. Stone is anything more to me than my housekeeper, who has any right to suppose?"

"Only that in the ordinary course of things, housekeepers do not preside at great tables; so one presumes there may be an extra measure of kindness."

"Mrs. Stone is a person of family under misfortunes."

"I adore your Lordship's generosity and condescension; more especially as one of her misfortunes is loss of character in your Lordship's service."

"I *presume Miss Fluart is in this mistaken*"

"Nothing more possible. It may be quite the contrary. She may have gained character for aught I know. But whether Mrs Stone's be loss or gain, yours, my Lord, will be certain loss by the change. Oh, but perhaps your Lordship does not mean to change—perhaps you intend this lady shall preserve the presidency."

"My dear Miss Fluart, how could such a notion enter your head?"

"By the eye, my Lord. One looks at Miss Campinet. One reasons upon past events. One makes conjectures of the future."

"I *look upon my daughter as a guest only. She will probably marry.* Mrs. Stone is an excellent manager. I did not think it prudent to offend her, and disarrange my household."

"And I really think it would be better for your Lordship to continue prudent. I am not qualified to represent Mrs. Stone."

"Thou art the oddest girl——"

"Yes, I know it, and advise your Lordship accordingly. A staid grave man like you, and a Peer of the realm, to think of a giddy flirt like me! Consider, my Lord, if you should repent, and I dare say you will, a wife is not easy to get rid of."

"Oh—I will run all risks."

"Then I shall take whole years of courtship; and after that you will have to fight half a hundred duels, for I have a little army of lovers, and a cross guardian who frights them away."

"Miss Fluart cannot want admirers, but may I presume to ask, is there one more favored than the rest?"

"No, not one, unless they take it into their heads, as your Lordship may do, that looking at them, and hearing them talk, is favor."

"And your heart, my dear Miss Fluart, is quite free?"

"Oh quite! and likely enough to continue; for, to tell you a secret, my Lord, a fop is my aversion; and there are so few men, young men now, who are not fops."

"That is a most admirable sentiment, and manifests great solidity of mind. You must be Lady Grondale."

"I don't feel the necessity of it, my Lord."

"But I do."

"It requires vast consideration; more than my poor brain will ever be able to bear. So take notice, my Lord, and don't say hereafter that I have encouraged your Lordship in so silly a pursuit. Besides, what would Mrs Stone say?"

"Be persuaded, my dear Miss Fluart, Mrs. Stone is nothing to me."

"No—I cannot give your Lordship credit for so much ingratitude. But let us talk no more of it till this day twelvemonth. Once a year is quite enough. And now, my Lord, when do you expect your annual visitors?"

"Very soon; a month perhaps."

"It will be about the time my guardian requires my return; and as your visitors are all unaccompanied by ladies, I presume it would be your Lordship's wish Miss Campinet should be absent. Will you give her leave to accompany me to Falmouth during that time?"

"Hermsprong will follow her there, perhaps?"

"My Lord, I do not pretend to take upon me to answer for things over which I have no control. This I can assure your Lordship, I have no cause to suppose he will; or that he would be well received by Caroline if he did."

"You will return with her?"

"If your Lordship invites me."

"Be assured of that; and I shall commit Caroline to your care with perfect confidence; assured you will not permit her to stain the honor of a noble house, of which, I hope, you will soon be the greatest ornament."

"My Lord, if you indulge in such suppositions, have the goodness to ascribe your disappointment, when it comes, to its true cause, the ardor of your imagination."

They were now at the hall door. His Lordship took his way to his library, to indulge the ardor of his imagination.

THE EXQUISITE REALISM OF JANE AUSTEN



THERE is no significant disagreement over the shining diadem of virtues that crowns Jane Austen's accomplishment. Her exquisite verbal artistry, her skill in building a story, her sharp observation of human nature, her brilliance in deflating a hundred kinds of fatuity and humbug, her mastery of social comedy—all these are conceded with hardly a dissenting voice. There are those, however, who regard the "small, square, two inches of ivory" she filled with such living hues as only a sort of miniature ivory tower. They point out that, aside from two or three excursions to Bath and other watering places, her novels hardly stray beyond a few square miles of rural England. They point out that her characters are drawn from so limited a social range as to include only the landed gentry and a few tradespeople and yeoman farmers. They point out that there is no mention in her pages of pauperism, the power loom, the Peninsular campaign, Mr. Pitt, or the Napoleonic Wars. All these grave charges are quite true.

They are also quite irrelevant It is no depreciation of the importance of current history and social conditions to say that an artist or a scientist may remain professionally unaware of them without becoming guilty of

cyrenaical evasion or superficiality. It would be hard to tell the sentiments of Sophocles or Virgil on these themes, or those of Keats, unless we went over their work with the minutest care; and for all the allusions to contemporary events scholars have discovered in Shakespeare's plays they are still disputing what were his religious views and whether or no he despised the common people. Some writers, of whom Jane Austen is one, are concerned with human nature itself. She observed it where she could, and confined herself to describing what she observed. Thomas Huxley could take a piece of chalk and deduce from it centuries of geologic history. There is as much human nature even in a country gentleman and his family as there is in the House of Commons or a cotton mill; and Jane Austen was at least as adept in finding it as the sociological novelists.

Jane Austen yields to none of these in the acuteness with which she portrays the world. Unlike many of them, however, she has no abstract pattern of social forces to propound, no program of social improvement to defend. Although she knows well enough how much people are the products of their surroundings, her analysis is of individual psychology rather than social process, and her contribution to our understanding is that she makes us see ourselves more clearly and judge ourselves more soundly. But Jane Austen's art is brilliant portraiture, not a blueprint or a lawyer's brief. She is too fascinated in observing life, understanding it, and revealing it to care much about pigeonholing it or changing it. Though she collected people, she had no interest in transfixing them with pins and classifying them as specimens in cabinets. The live creature—so ridiculous, enchanting, fantastic, moving, and absurd—was what she loved to watch. And the very intensity of her loving absorption re-creates Georgian England as solidly as if she had been a deliberate social historian.

She watched with an interest almost entirely spectatorial. Her tendency is toward a mild and sympathetic amusement deepening at times to intellectual scorn and disapprobation. Toward her audience her attitude is the assumption that it consists of people like herself; that they will enjoy the spectacle of life and the revelation of folly, and enjoy both all the more if their absurdities are no more than hinted at by a subtle and completely conscious intelligence. She and they will be equals smiling at a delicately delightful comedy. With just a dash of enjoyable acerbity, sanity of vision and witty insight are offered for their own sakes, and observation of the social scene becomes its own sufficient reward. Observation itself thus grows into critical observation, judgment into critical judgment.

Nowhere are these facts clearer than in Pride and Prejudice. The theme of the novel is clearly implied by its title: the story is a contention between Darcy's pride and Elizabeth Bennet's prejudice. Round the two are grouped the fashionable and town-bred snobbery of Miss Bingley, the arrogance of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the servile vanity of Mr. Collins, the pedantry of Elizabeth's sister Mary, the stupid bias of Mrs. Bennet, the whimsical and disillusioned quirks of Mr. Bennet, and the plausible duplicities of Wickham: all variations on pride and prejudice. Their counterpoint is as deliberate and sophisticated as anything devised by Aldous Huxley.

Elizabeth's prejudice is inflamed by the appearance of stand-offishness in Darcy, by overhearing his refusal to dance with her at the ball, by the humiliating justice of his scorn for her foolish mother and ill-bred sisters, by her careless willingness to believe the ungrounded slanders of Wickham. Darcy's pride is swelled by his own wealth, accomplishments, and breeding, disgusted by the vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet and Lydia, humiliated by the misfortune of falling in love with the daughter of such a family, and affronted by Elizabeth's disdain. We should observe that, though Darcy's behavior is tactless, his judgment is sound. Mrs. Bennet is not such a mother-in-law as a sensible man could wish, and the younger Bennet daughters are noisy and cheaply flirtatious. Elizabeth's resentment of him, however, is mere group loyalty and wounded self-esteem. In the course of the action both his pride and her prejudice are humbled.

The instrument of chastening is mainly critical laughter. Properly so, for the failings are not vicious enough to merit severer chastisement. Jane Austen laughs more sharply at the sycophantic Collins and the snobbish Lady Catherine than she does at Darcy or Elizabeth. And even her moral disapproval of Wickham and the hoydenish Lydia, though deep and clear cut, never violates the mood of comedy by becoming emotionally violent. The same consistency of tone is observable in all her books. The realism is always diamond-clear and diamond-sparkling, and its critical revelation is constant. Emma Woodhouse takes herself down a peg or two by discovering the dangers of playing providence. The dullness of John Thorpe's conversation is magically transubstantiated into a rich exposure of his own complacence. Mr. Bennet interrupts his wife's monologue upon what a great matrimonial catch the new occupant of Netherfield Park will be for one of their girls by asking slyly if that was the newcomer's object in settling there. In all these instances, and in a hundred otheis, the laughter is a laughter of critical insight that bathes human nature itself in light.

Jane Austen's comedy is invisible to an occasional reader not because it is too fragile, tenuous, and spinsterish, as many people erroneously assume—in reality her mirth can be very hearty—but because it is completely civilized and mature. To see the fun, for example, of Darcy's brief answers to Caroline Bingley as she tries to center his attention on herself and he continues writing a letter to his sister—and to share Elizabeth Bennet's demure amusement at her humiliation—requires an ability to see all around a social situation. It demands realizing Miss Bingley's hopes about Darcy, her incipient dislike of Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's knowledge of that dislike. It demands realizing Miss Bingley's desire to show Elizabeth how intimately favored is her own friendship with Darcy, and observing how Darcy dashes this desire at every turn. It demands above all an understanding of Miss Bingley's fatal inability to desist from her line of action even when she has begun to perceive that it is only exposing her before the very person she wished to impress. The instant and penetrating clarity with which Jane Austen conveys all these intricacies is what endows her with her mastery of social comedy.

To say these things is not to imply that her wit is all an involved Meredithian business of subtle overtones. On the contrary, she can be exceedingly good at burlesque verging even into broad farce. Mrs. Bennet's unceasing shallow gabble is as ludicrous in its own way as Mrs. Malaprop's jumbled volubility; and the gawky and solemn pomposity of Mr. Collins is a marvel of grotesque caricature. But perhaps the master stroke in comic characterization occurs when Lady Catherine de Bourgh pays her single visit to the Bennets at Longbourn. She has come to obtain Elizabeth's word that she will not marry Darcy; she has asked to speak with Elizabeth in the garden. Now, if ever, one would think, she would make some effort at tact. Moving through the hall, she throws open the doors into the dining parlor and drawing room and looks across the thresholds. "Decent looking rooms," she pronounces them, as if she had expected to find them pigpens. It is incidentally one of Jane Austen's great feats of plot construction that Lady Catherine should humiliate her nephew at Rosings, and in front of Elizabeth, by showing herself quite as vulgar as Mrs. Bennet, whose silly ill-breeding he had despised.

But all of Jane Austen is not exhausted in comedy. She has moral judgment and moral depth as well. Though she holds the scales evenly between Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, in Sense and Sensibility, *she makes it clear that the younger sister's pampering of her own emotions involves a*

self-indulgent thoughtlessness of others, and that Elinor's sane self-restraint is proper control, not absence of feeling. Her heroines are always making salutary discoveries about themselves: Emma of her own vanity and self-deception; Catherine Moreland of her naïveté in taking Gothic romances as guides to life, Elizabeth of her willingness to trust first impressions.

And although nobody in Jane Austen's world ever tears a passion to tatters, there is no absence of deep and strong feeling. Who doubts the reality of Jane Bennet's suffering when the tenant of Netherfield fails to be heard from, or the bitterness of Mr. Bennet's remorse for the parental laxity that led to Lydia's seduction and elopement? And when Elizabeth, repenting of her prejudice against Darcy and deeply in love with him at last, discovers that even her father believes her swayed by the desire to make a wealthy marriage, her troubled outcry is almost heart-rending: "Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable." How eloquent the words are, in their very insufficiency, how moving! It adds the last touch to Jane Austen's perfections that on rare occasions she could even strike this note of exquisite, of almost anguished, emotion.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

*** Originally written around 1796-97, *Pride and Prejudice* was not published until 1813. The extracts given here, containing the whole story of Mr. Collins' courtship of Elizabeth, are from Chapters 13, 14, 15, 19, and 20 ***

The Courtship of Mr. Collins

I HOPE, my dear," said Mr. Bennet to his wife, as they were at breakfast the next morning, "that you have ordered a good dinner to-day, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party."

"Who do you mean, my dear? I know of nobody that is coming, I am sure, unless Charlotte Lucas should happen to call in—and I hope *my* dinners are good enough for her. I do not believe she often sees such at home."

"The person of whom I speak is a gentleman, and a stranger."

Mrs. Bennet's eyes sparkled.—"A gentleman and a stranger! It is Mr Bingley, I am sure. Why, Jane—you never dropt a word of this; you sly thing! Well, I am sure I shall be extremely glad to see Mr. Bingley.—But good Lord! how unlucky! there is not a bit of fish to be got to-day. Lydia, my love, ring the bell—I must speak to Hill this moment."

"It is *not* Mr. Bingley," said her husband; "it is a person whom I never saw in the whole course of my life."

This roused a general astonishment, and he had the pleasure of being eagerly questioned by his wife and five daughters at once.

After amusing himself some time with their curiosity, he thus explained—

"About a month ago I received this letter; and about a fortnight ago I answered it, for I thought it a case of some delicacy, and requiring early attention. It is from my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, when I am dead, may turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases."

"Oh! my dear," cried his wife, "I cannot bear to hear that mentioned. Pray do not talk of that odious man. I do think it is the hardest thing in the world, that your estate should be entailed away from your own children; and I am sure, if I had been you, I should have tried long ago to do something or other about it."

Jane and Elizabeth attempted to explain to her the nature of an entail. They had often attempted it before, but it was a subject on which Mrs. Bennet was beyond the reach of reason, and she continued to rail bitterly

against the cruelty of settling an estate away from a family of five daughters, in favor of a man whom nobody cared anything about

"It certainly is a most iniquitous affair," said Mr. Bennet, "and nothing can clear Mr. Collins from the guilt of inheriting Longbourn. But if you will listen to his letter, you may perhaps be a little softened by his manner of expressing himself."

"No, that I am sure I shall not; and I think it was very impertinent of him to write to you at all, and very hypocritical I hate such false friends. Why could not he keep on quarreling with you, as his father did before him?"

"Why, indeed, he does seem to have had some filial scruples on that head, as you will hear."

"*Hunsford, near Westerham, Kent,*
"15th October.

"Dear Sir,

"The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honored father always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him, I have frequently wished to heal the breach, but for some time I was kept back by my own doubts, fearing lest it might seem disrespectful to his memory for me to be on good terms with any one with whom it had always pleased him to be at variance.—'There, Mrs. Bennet.'—My mind, however, is now made up on the subject, for having received ordination at Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honorable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence has preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavor to demean myself with grateful respect towards her Ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within the reach of my influence, and on these grounds I flatter myself that my present overtures of goodwill are highly commendable, and that the circumstance of my being next in the entail of Longbourn estate will be kindly overlooked on your side, and not lead you to reject the offered olive-branch. I cannot be otherwise than concerned at being the means of injuring your amiable daughters, and beg leave to apologize for it, as well as to assure you of my readiness to make them every possible amends,—but of this hereafter. If you should have no objection to receive me into your house, I propose myself the satisfaction of waiting on you and your family, Monday, November 18th, by four o'clock, and shall probably trespass on your hospitality till the Saturday se'nnight following, which I can do without any inconvenience, as Lady Catherine is far from

objecting to my occasional absence on a Sunday, provided that some other clergyman is engaged to do the duty of the day.—I remain, dear sir, with respectful compliments to your lady and daughters, your well-wisher and friend,

"William Collins."

"At four o'clock, therefore, we may expect this peace-making gentleman," said Mr. Bennet, as he folded up the letter. "He seems to be a most conscientious and polite young man, upon my word, and I doubt not will prove a valuable acquaintance, especially if Lady Catherine should be so indulgent as to let him come to us again."

"There is some sense in what he says about the girls, however, and if he is disposed to make them any amends, I shall not be the person to discourage him."

"Though it is difficult," said Jane, "to guess in what way he can mean to make us the atonement he thinks our due, the wish is certainly to his credit."

Elizabeth was chiefly struck with his extraordinary deference for Lady Catherine, and his kind intention of christening, marrying, and burying his parishioners whenever it were required.

"He must be an oddity, I think," said she. "I cannot make him out.—There is something very pompous in his style.—And what can he mean by apologizing for being next in the entail?—We cannot suppose he would help it if he could.—Can he be a sensible man, sir?"

"No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him."

"In point of composition," said Mary, "his letter does not seem defective. The idea of the olive-branch perhaps is not wholly new, yet I think it is well expressed."

To Catherine and Lydia, neither the letter nor its writer were in any degree interesting. It was next to impossible that their cousin should come in a scarlet coat, and it was now some weeks since they had received pleasure from the society of a man in any other color. As for their mother, Mr. Collins's letter had done away much of her ill-will, and she was preparing to see him with a degree of composure which astonished her husband and daughters.

Mr. Collins was punctual to his time, and was received with great politeness by the whole family. Mr. Bennet indeed said little; but the ladies were ready enough to talk, and Mr. Collins seemed neither in need of encouragement, nor inclined to be silent himself. He was a tall, heavy-looking young man of five-and-twenty. His air was grave and stately, and his manners

were very formal. He had not been long seated before he complimented Mrs. Bennet on having so fine a family of daughters, said he had heard much of their beauty, but that in this instance fame had fallen short of the truth, and added, that he did not doubt her seeing them all in due time well disposed of in marriage. This gallantry was not much to the taste of some of his hearers; but Mrs. Bennet, who quarreled with no compliments, answered most readily.

"You are very kind, I am sure; and I wish with all my heart it may prove so, for else they will be destitute enough. Things are settled so oddly."

"You allude, perhaps, to the entail of this estate."

"Ah! sir, I do indeed. It is a grievous affair to my poor girls, you must confess. Not that I mean to find fault with *you*, for such things I know are all chance in this world. There is no knowing how estates will go when once they come to be entailed."

"I am very sensible, madam, of the hardship to my fair cousins, and could say much on the subject, but that I am cautious of appearing forward and precipitate. But I can assure the young ladies that I come prepared to admire them. At present I will not say more, but, perhaps, when we are better acquainted—"

He was interrupted by a summons to dinner, and the girls smiled on each other. They were not the only objects of Mr. Collins's admiration. The hall, the dining-room, and all its furniture, were examined and appraised, and his commendation of everything would have touched Mrs. Bennet's heart, but for the mortifying supposition of his viewing it all as his own future property. The dinner too in its turn was highly admired, and he begged to know to which of his fair cousins the excellency of its cooking was owing. But here he was set right by Mrs. Bennet, who assured him with some asperity that they were very well able to keep a good cook, and that her daughters had nothing to do in the kitchen. He begged pardon for having displeased her. In a softened tone she declared herself not at all offended, but he continued to apologize for about a quarter of an hour.

During dinner, Mr. Bennet scarcely spoke at all; but when the servants were withdrawn, he thought it time to have some conversation with his guest, and therefore started a subject in which he expected him to shine, by observing that he seemed very fortunate in his patroness. Lady Catherine de Bourgh's attention to his wishes, and consideration for his comfort, appeared very remarkable. Mr. Bennet could not have chosen better. Mr. Collins was eloquent in her praise. The subject elevated him to more than usual solemnity of manner, and with a most important aspect he protested that "he had never in his life witnessed such behavior in a person of rank—such affability and condescension, as he had himself experienced from Lady

Catherine. She had been graciously pleased to approve of both the discourses which he had already had the honor of preaching before her. She had also asked him twice to dine at Rosings, and had sent for him only the Saturday before, to make up her pool of quadrille in the evening. Lady Catherine was reckoned proud by many people he knew, but *he* had never seen anything but affability in her. She had always spoken to him as she would to any other gentleman; she made not the smallest objection to his joining in the society of the neighborhood nor to his leaving his parish occasionally for a week or two, to visit his relations. She had even condescended to advise him to marry as soon as he could, provided he chose with discretion; and had once paid him a visit in his humble parsonage, where she had perfectly approved all the alterations he had been making, and had even vouchsafed to suggest some herself—some shelves in the closets upstairs."

"That is all very proper and civil, I am sure," said Mrs. Bennet, "and I daresay she is a very agreeable woman. It is a pity that great ladies in general are not more like her. Does she live near you, sir?"

"The garden in which stands my humble abode is separated only by a lane from Rosings Park, her ladyship's residence."

"I think you said she was a widow, sir? has she any family?"

"She has only one daughter, the heiress of Rosings, and of very extensive property."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Bennet, shaking her head, "then she is better off than many girls. And what sort of young lady is she? is she handsome?"

"She is a most charming young lady indeed. Lady Catherine herself says that, in point of true beauty, Miss de Bourgh is far superior to the handsomest of her sex, because there is that in her features which marks the young woman of distinguished birth. She is unfortunately of a sickly constitution, which has prevented her making that progress in many accomplishments which she could not otherwise have failed of, as I am informed by the lady who superintended her education, and who still resides with them. But she is perfectly amiable, and often condescends to drive by my humble abode in her little phaeton and ponies."

"Has she been presented? I do not remember her name among the ladies at court."

"Her indifferent state of health unhappily prevents her being in town, and by that means, as I told Lady Catherine myself one day, has deprived the British court of its brightest ornament. Her ladyship seemed pleased with the idea; and you may imagine that I am happy on every occasion to offer those little delicate compliments which are always acceptable to ladies. I have more than once observed to Lady Catherine that her charming daughter seemed born to be a duchess, and that the most elevated rank, instead of

giving her consequence, would be adorned by her.—These are the kind of little things which please her ladyship, and it is a sort of attention which I conceive myself peculiarly bound to pay."

"You judge very properly," said Mr. Bennet, "and it is happy for you that you possess the talent of flattering with delicacy. May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study?"

"They arise chiefly from what is passing at the time, and though I sometimes amuse myself with suggesting and arranging such little elegant compliments as may be adapted to ordinary occasions, I always wish to give them as unstudied an air as possible."

Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped, and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment, maintaining at the same time the most resolute composure of countenance, and, except in an occasional glance at Elizabeth, requiring no partner in his pleasure.

By tea-time, however, the dose had been enough, and Mr. Bennet was glad to take his guest into the drawing-room again, and, when tea was over, glad to invite him to read aloud to the ladies. Mr Collins readily assented, and a book was produced, but on beholding it (for everything announced it to be from a circulating library), he started back, and begging pardon, protested that he never read novels. Kitty stared at him, and Lydia exclaimed —Other books were produced, and after some deliberation he chose *Fordyce's Sermons*. Lydia gaped as he opened the volume, and before he had, with very monotonous solemnity, read three pages, she interrupted him with—

"Do you know, mamma, that my uncle Philips talks of turning away Richard; and if he does, Colonel Forster will hire him. My aunt told me so herself on Saturday. I shall walk to Merytón to-morrow to hear more about it, and to ask when Mr. Denny comes back from town."

Lydia was bid by her two eldest sisters to hold her tongue, but Mr. Collins, much offended, laid aside his book, and said—

"I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of a serious stamp, though written solely for their benefit. It amazes me, I confess,—for, certainly, there can be nothing so advantageous to them as instruction But I will no longer importune my young cousin."

Then turning to Mr. Bennet, he offered himself as his antagonist at backgammon. Mr. Bennet accepted the challenge, observing that he acted very wisely in leaving the girls to their own trifling amusements Mrs Bennet and her daughters apologized most civilly for Lydia's interruption, and promised that it should not occur again, if he would resume his book; but Mr. Collins,

after assuring them that he bore his young cousin no ill-will, and should never resent her behavior as any affront, seated himself at another table with Mr. Bennet, and prepared for backgammon.

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of Nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance. The subjection in which his father had brought him up had given him originally great humility of manner; but it was now a good deal counteracted by the self-conceit of a weak head, living in retirement, and the consequential feelings of early and unexpected prosperity. A fortunate chance had recommended him to Lady Catherine de Bourgh when the living of Hunsford was vacant, and the respect which he felt for her high rank, and his veneration for her as his patroness, mingling with a very good opinion of himself, of his authority as a clergyman, and his right as a rector, made him altogether a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance, and humility.

Having now a good house and very sufficient income, he intended to marry; and in seeking a reconciliation with the Longbourn family he had a wife in view, as he meant to choose one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends—of atonement—for inheriting their father's estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part.

His plan did not vary on seeing them. Miss Bennet's lovely face confirmed his views, and established all his strictest notions of what was due to seniority; and for the first evening *she* was his settled choice. The next morning, however, made an alteration; for in a quarter of an hour's tête-à-tête with Mrs. Bennet before breakfast, a conversation beginning with his parsonage-house, and leading naturally to the avowal of his hopes, that a mistress for it might be found at Longbourn, produced from her, amid very complaisant smiles and general encouragement, a caution against the very Jane he had fixed on. "As to her *younger* daughters, she could not take upon her to say—she could not positively answer—but she did not *know* of any prepossession; —her *eldest* daughter, she must just mention—she felt it incumbent on her to hint, was likely to be very soon engaged."

Mr. Collins had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth—and it was soon done—done while Mrs. Bennet was *stirring the fire*. Elizabeth, equally next to Jane in birth and beauty, succeeded *her of course*.

Mrs. Bennet treasured up the hint, and trusted that she might soon have

two daughters married; and the man whom she could not bear to speak of the day before was now high in her good graces.

The next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances, which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words: "May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honor of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?"

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered, "Oh dear!—Yes—certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy—I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs." And, gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,

"Dear madam, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself."

"No, no, nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are." And upon Elizabeth's seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, "Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins"

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction—and a moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness, but allow me to assure you, that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble, my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it would be ad-

visable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing, that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him farther, and he continued:—

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness, and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool, that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry.—Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favor of matrimony, it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighborhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little, as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you

may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honor of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I *am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall* hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins *very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disap*prove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honor of seeing her again, I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled" *And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room,* had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her:

"When I do myself the honor of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favorable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these:—It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favor; and you should take it into further consideration, that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small, that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honor you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in willful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew; determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behavior at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Mr. Collins was not left long to the silent contemplation of his successful love; for Mrs. Bennet, having dawdled about in the vestibule to watch for the end of the conference, no sooner saw Elizabeth open the door and with quick step pass her towards the staircase, than she entered the breakfast-room, and congratulated both him and herself in warm terms on the happy prospect of their nearer connection. Mr. Collins received and returned these felicitations with equal pleasure, and then proceeded to relate the particulars

of their interview, with the result of which he trusted he had every reason to be satisfied, since the refusal which his cousin had steadfastly given him would naturally flow from her bashful modesty and the genuine delicacy of her character.

This information, however, startled Mrs. Bennet,—she would have been glad to be equally satisfied that her daughter had meant to encourage him by protesting against his proposals, but she dared not believe it, and could not help saying so.

"But, depend upon it, Mr. Collins," she added, "that Lizzy shall be brought to reason. I will speak to her about it myself directly. She is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interest; but I will *make* her know it."

"Pardon me for interrupting you, madam," cried Mr. Collins; "but if she is really headstrong and foolish, I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation, who naturally looks for happiness in the marriage state. If therefore she actually persists in rejecting my suit, perhaps it were better not to force her into accepting me, because if liable to such defects of temper, she could not contribute much to my felicity."

"Sir, you quite misunderstand me," said Mrs. Bennet, alarmed. "Lizzy is only headstrong in such matters as these. In everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we shall very soon settle it with her, I am sure."

She would not give him time to reply, but hurrying instantly to her husband, called out as she entered the library, "Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have *her*."

Mr. Bennet raised his eyes from his book as she entered, and fixed them on her face with a calm unconcern which was not in the least altered by her communication.

"I have not the pleasure of understanding you," said he, when she had finished her speech. "Of what are you talking?"

"Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy. Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy."

"And what am I to do on the occasion?—It seems an hopeless business."

"Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him."

"Let her be called down. She shall hear my opinion."

Mrs. Bennet rang the bell, and Miss Elizabeth was summoned to the library.

"Come here, child," cried her father as she appeared. "I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?" Elizabeth replied that it was. "Very well—and this offer of marriage you have refused?"

"I have, sir."

"Very well. We now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet?"

"Yes, or I will never see her again."

"An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*."

Elizabeth could not but smile at such a conclusion of such a beginning; but Mrs. Bennet, who had persuaded herself that her husband regarded the affair as she wished, was excessively disappointed.

"What do you mean, Mr. Bennet, by talking in this way? You promised me to *insist* upon her marrying him."

"My dear," replied her husband, "I have two small favors to request. First, that you will allow me the free use of my understanding on the present occasion; and secondly, of my room. I shall be glad to have the library to myself as soon as may be."

Not yet, however, in spite of her disappointment in her husband, did Mrs. Bennet give up the point. She talked to Elizabeth again and again; coaxed and threatened her by turns. She endeavored to secure Jane in her interest; but Jane, with all possible mildness, declined interfering, and Elizabeth, sometimes with real earnestness, and sometimes with playful gayety, replied to her attacks. Though her manner varied, however, her determination never did.

Mr. Collins, meanwhile, was meditating in solitude on what had passed. He thought too well of himself to comprehend on what motive his cousin could refuse him; and though his pride was hurt, he suffered in no other way. His regard for her was quite imaginary; and the possibility of her deserving her mother's reproach prevented his feeling any regret.

While the family were in this confusion, Charlotte Lucas came to spend the day with them. She was met in the vestibule by Lydia, who, flying to her, cried in a half whisper, "I am glad you are come, for there is such fun here!—What do you think has happened this morning?—Mr. Collins has made an offer to Lizzy, and she will not have him."

Charlotte had hardly time to answer, before they were joined by Kitty, who came to tell the same news; and no sooner had they entered the breakfast-room, where Mrs. Bennet was alone, than she likewise began on the

subject, calling on Miss Lucas for her compassion, and entreating her to persuade her friend Lizzy to comply with the wishes of all her family. "Pray do, my dear Miss Lucas," she added in a melancholy tone, "for nobody is on my side, nobody takes part with me, I am cruelly used, nobody feels for my poor nerves."

Charlotte's reply was spared by the entrance of Jane and Elizabeth.

"Aye, there she comes," continued Mrs. Bennet, "looking as unconcerned as may be, and caring no more for us than if we were at York, provided she can have her own way.—But I tell you what, Miss Lizzy—if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all—and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead.—*I* shall not be able to keep you—and so I warn you—I have done with you from this very day.—I told you in the library, you know, that I should never speak to you again, and you will find me as good as my word. I have no pleasure in talking to undutiful children.—Not that I have much pleasure, indeed, in talking to anybody. People who suffer as I do from nervous complaints can have no great inclination for talking. Nobody can tell what I suffer!—But it is always so. Those who do not complain are never pitied."

Her daughters listened in silence to this effusion, sensible that any attempt to reason with or soothe her would only increase the irritation She talked on, therefore, without interruption from any of them, till they were joined by Mr. Collins, who entered with an air more stately than usual, and on perceiving whom, she said to the girls, "Now, I do insist upon it, that you, all of you hold your tongues, and let Mr. Collins and me have a little conversation together."

Elizabeth passed quietly out of the room, Jane and Kitty followed, but Lydia stood her ground, determined to hear all she could, and Charlotte, detained first by the civility of Mr. Collins, whose inquiries after herself and all her family were very minute, and then by a little curiosity, satisfied herself with walking to the window and pretending not to hear. In a doleful voice Mrs. Bennet thus began the projected conversation·—"Oh! Mr. Collins!"

"My dear madam," replied he, "let us be forever silent on this point. Far be it from me," he presently continued, in a voice that marked his displeasure, "to resent the behavior of your daughter. Resignation to inevitable evils is the duty of us all, the peculiar duty of a young man who has been so fortunate as I have been in early preferment; and I trust I am resigned. Perhaps not the less so from feeling a doubt of my positive happiness had my fair cousin honored me with her hand, for I have often observed that resignation is never so perfect as when the blessing denied begins to lose some-

what of its value in our estimation. You will not, I hope, consider me as showing any disrespect to your family, my dear madam, by thus withdrawing my pretensions to your daughter's favor, without having paid yourself and Mr. Bennet the compliment of requesting you to interpose your authority in my behalf. My conduct may, I fear, be objectionable in having accepted my dismission from your daughter's lips instead of your own. But we are all liable to error. I have certainly meant well through the whole affair. My object has been to secure an amiable companion for myself, with due consideration for the advantage of all your family, and if my *manner* has been at all reprehensible, I here beg leave to apologize."

ANTIDOTE TO CRACK-POTS



THE ROMANTIC PERIOD *was an age of extravagance. Chateaubriands, de Mussets, and Byrons paraded the pageant of their bleeding hearts over all Europe. Blood-curdling horror novels petrified people with terror and lachrymose romances dissolved them in puddles of tears Political economists forged "the iron law of wages" into an iron collar for the neck of labor, and optimists proclaimed the dogma of mechanical progress with well-nigh persecuting zeal. Thomas Love Peacock might almost have been designed by nature as an antidote to such goings-on. All of them, and many more, he bombarded with parody in novels that are an endless scintillation of wit.*

Like a good many antidotes, he tended subtly to exhibit in reverse the very qualities he opposed. The bee in the bonnet is his special delight, and no novelist has a more gorgeous gallery of absurd enthusiasts. But the bee in other people's bonnets ultimately becomes a bee in his own bonnet His laughter at crotchets, innovations, theories, the current fashionable novelty, and the current intellectual jargon winds up by turning itself into a crotchet. The two things he truly loves and takes seriously are classical scholarship and comfortable living. Even these he exaggerates to the point where he himself becomes a caricature of the genial, eccentric, Tory-epicurean scholar. Indeed, one suspects he knows this, and deliberately

portrays an occasional rotund and humorously pedantic gourmet to whom our attention is directed with an enormous wink.

The house party of variegated crackpots is his favorite fictional machinery Adapted, no doubt, from Plato's Symposium, it anticipates both Shaw and Aldous Huxley in the dramatizing of ideas. In Crotchet Castle, as in Crome Yellow and Heartbreak House, there is a group of summer guests, Nightmare Abbey, Gryll Grange, and Melincourt all have similar gatherings Headlong Hall is the scene of a Christmas party where a menagerie of eccentrics display their characteristic attitudes in ways whose hilarity the reader may judge for himself. What no sample, however, can convey is the unflagging pace and pyrotechnical agility with which Peacock can keep all these humours clashing against each other.

Hardly less lively is Crotchet Castle, with its witty digs at utilitarianism and political economy, of which Dr. Ffolliott disposes with crushing finality. "My principles, sir, in these things are, to take as much as I can get, and to pay no more than I can help. These are every man's principles, whether they be right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell" Peacock's fancy reaches delirious heights in inventing among his characters Mr Henbane, a toxicologist who spends his life killing cats with various poisons and reviving them with the antidotes, and a Mr. Firedamp, who believes that "wherever there is water, there is malaria," and whose hair stands on end when Mr Philpot, the African explorer, describes the course of mighty inland rivers, all of which his horrified imagination conjures up as reservoirs of pestilence.

There is too much playfulness and too little depth of purpose in Peacock for him to be a serious satirist. Most delightful of Laodiceans, his loudest roars are only a comic mask. He dissipates his sharpest impressions by irresponsible fancy; his very sympathies, his tickled enjoyment of the ridiculous, weaken his satiric impact. He was an affectionate friend of Shelley's despite his own skeptical conservatism, and although he satirizes that unhappy idealist in the melancholy Scythrop of Nightmare Abbey, he does so with no real animus. For the idea of progress ("the march of mind," he bitingly calls it, promulgated by "the Steam Intellect Society"), and the doctrines of political economy, that dismal science which rationalized unscrupulous rapacity, he felt the most violent scorn of which he was capable. Against them he fires his most piercing shafts But he attacks them in terms of intellectual absurdity, pretentiousness, and chicanery, not in terms of the concrete human misery Dickens reveals beneath the leaden

skies of Coketown Peacock's object is the pleasure of the chase rather than the extermination of the prey. Almost in spite of his own intent and his uproarious high spirits, by sheer virtuosity of marksmanship, he brings victim after victim thudding to the ground. And by the end some scores of the most ludicrous and pernicious follies of his day have been brought down.

HEADLONG HALL

« « « *Headlong Hall* was first published in 1816. The selections given here are from Chapters 1, 2 and 5 » » »

Four Travelers Discuss the State of the World

THE ambiguous light of a December morning, peeping through the windows of the Holyhead mail, dispelled the soft visions of the four inside, who had slept, or seemed to sleep, through the first seventy miles of the road, with as much comfort as may be supposed consistent with the jolting of the vehicle, and an occasional admonition to *remember the coachman*, thundered through the open door, accompanied by the gentle breath of Boreas, into the ears of the drowsy traveller.

These four persons were, Mr. Foster,* the perfectibilian; Mr. Escot,† the deteriorationist; Mr. Jenkison,‡ the statu-quo-ite; and the Reverend Doctor Gaster,¶ who, though of course neither a philosopher nor a man of taste, had so won on the Squire's fancy, by a learned dissertation on the art of stuffing a turkey, that he concluded no Christmas party would be complete without him.

The conversation among these illuminati soon became animated; and Mr. Foster, who, we must observe, was a thin gentleman, about thirty years of age, with an aquiline nose, black eyes, white teeth, and black hair—took occasion to panegyrize the vehicle in which they were then traveling, and observed what remarkable improvements had been made in the means of facilitating intercourse between distant parts of the kingdom: he held forth with great energy on the subject of roads and railways, canals and tunnels, manufactures and machinery: "In short," said he, "everything we look on

* Foster, quasi *φωστηρ*,—from *φαος* and *τηρεω*, lucem servo, conservo, observo, custodio,—one who watches over and guards the light, a sense in which the word is often used amongst us, when we speak of *fostering a flame.*

† Escot, quasi *εις σκοτον*, *in tenebras*, scilicet, intuens; one who is always looking into the dark side of the question.

‡ Jenkison. This name may be derived from *αιεν εξ ισων*, *semper ex æqualibus*—scilicet, mensuris, omnia metiens. one who from equal measures divides and distributes all things; one who from equal measures can always produce arguments on both sides of a question, with so much nicety and exactness, as to keep the said question eternally pending, and the balance of the controversy perpetually in statu quo By an aphæresis of the α, an elision of the second ε, and an easy and natural mutation of ξ into κ, the derivation of this name proceeds according to the strictest principles of etymology. *αιεν εξ ισων—ιεν εξ ισων—ιεν εκ ισων—ιεν'κ ισων—ιενκισων*—Ienkison—Jenkison.

¶ Gaster. scilicet *Γαστηρ*—Venter,—et præterea nihil.

attests the progress of mankind in all the arts of life, and demonstrates their gradual advancement towards a state of unlimited perfection."

Mr. Escot, who was somewhat younger than Mr. Foster, but rather more pale and saturnine in his aspect, here took up the thread of the discourse, observing, that the proposition just advanced seemed to him perfectly contrary to the true state of the case: "for," said he, "these improvements, as you call them, appear to me only so many links in the great chain of corruption, which will soon fetter the whole human race in irreparable slavery and incurable wretchedness: your improvements proceed in a simple ratio, while the factitious wants and unnatural appetites they engender proceed in a compound one, and thus one generation acquires fifty wants, and fifty means of supplying them are invented, which each in its turn engenders two new ones; so that the next generation has a hundred, the next two hundred, the next four hundred, till every human being becomes such a helpless compound of perverted inclinations, that he is altogether at the mercy of external circumstances, loses all independence and singleness of character, and degenerates so rapidly from the primitive dignity of his sylvan origin, that it is scarcely possible to indulge in any other expectation, than that the whole species must at length be exterminated by its own infinite imbecility and vileness."

"Your opinions," said Mr. Jenkison, a round-faced little gentleman of about forty-five, "seem to differ *toto cœlo*. I have often debated the matter in my own mind, *pro* and *con*, and have at length arrived at this conclusion, —*that there is not in the human race a tendency either to moral perfectibility* or deterioration; but that the quantities of each are so exactly balanced by their reciprocal results, that the species, with respect to the sum of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and misery, remains exactly and perpetually *in statu quo*."

"Surely," said Mr. Foster, "you cannot maintain such a proposition in the face of evidence so luminous Look at the progress of all the arts and sciences, —see chemistry, botany, astronomy——."

"Surely," said Mr Escot, "experience deposes against you. Look at the rapid growth of corruption, luxury, selfishness——."

"Really, gentlemen," said the Reverend Doctor Gaster, after clearing the husk in his throat with two or three hems, "this is a very sceptical, and, I must say, atheistical conversation, and I should have thought, out of respect to my cloth——."

Here the coach stopped, and the coachman, opening the door, vociferated, "Breakfast, gentlemen;" a sound which so gladdened the ears of the divine, that the alacrity with which he sprang from the vehicle superinduced a distortion of his ankle, and he was obliged to limp into the inn be-

tween Mr. Escot and Mr. Jenkison; the former observing that he ought to look for nothing but evil, and, therefore, should not be surprised at this little accident, the latter remarking that the comfort of a good breakfast, and the pain of a sprained ankle, pretty exactly balanced each other. . . .

The morning being extremely cold, [Dr. Gaster] contrived to be seated as near the fire as was consistent with his other object of having a perfect command of the table and its apparatus; which consisted not only of the ordinary comforts of tea and toast, but of a delicious supply of new-laid eggs, and a magnificent round of beef; against which Mr. Escot immediately pointed all the artillery of his eloquence, declaring the use of animal food, conjointly with that of fire, to be one of the principal causes of the present degeneracy of mankind. "The natural and original man," said he, "lived in the woods. the roots and fruits of the earth supplied his simple nutriment· he had few desires and no diseases. But, when he began to sacrifice victims on the altar of superstition, to pursue the goat and the deer, and, by the pernicious invention of fire, to pervert their flesh into food, luxury, disease, and premature death, were let loose upon the world. Such is clearly the correct interpretation of the fable of Prometheus, which is a symbolical portraiture of that disastrous epoch, when man first applied fire to culinary purposes, and thereby surrendered his liver to the vulture of disease. From that period the stature of mankind has been in a state of gradual diminution, and I have not the least doubt that it will continue to grow *small by degrees and lamentably less*, till the whole race will vanish imperceptibly from the face of the earth."

"I cannot agree," said Mr. Foster, "in the consequences being so very disastrous. I admit, that in some respects the use of animal food retards, though it cannot materially inhibit, the perfectibility of the species. But the use of fire was indispensably necessary, as Æschylus and Virgil expressly assert, to give being to the various arts of life, which, in their rapid and interminable progress, will finally conduct every individual of the race to the philosophic pinnacle of pure and perfect felicity."

"In the controversy concerning animal and vegetable food," said Mr. Jenkison, "there is much to be said on both sides, and, the question being in equipoise, I content myself with a mixed diet, and make a point of eating whatever is placed before me, provided it be good in its kind"

In this opinion his two brother philosophers practically coincided, though they both ran down the theory as highly detrimental to the best interests of man.

"I am really astonished," said the Reverend Doctor Gaster, gracefully picking off the supernal fragments of an egg he had just cracked, and clearing away a space at the top for the reception of a small piece of butter—"I am really astonished, gentlemen, at the very heterodox opinions I have

heard you deliver: since nothing can be more obvious than that all animals were created solely and exclusively for the use of man."

"Even the tiger that devours him?" said Mr. Escot.

"Certainly," said Doctor Gaster.

"How do you prove it?" said Mr. Escot.

"It requires no proof," said Doctor Gaster: "it is a point of doctrine It is written, therefore it is so."

"Nothing can be more logical," said Mr. Jenkison. "It has been said," continued he, "that the ox was expressly made to be eaten by man: it may be said, by a parity of reasoning, that man was expressly made to be eaten by the tiger: but as wild oxen exist where there are no men, and men where there are no tigers, it would seem that in these instances they do not properly answer the ends of their creation."

"It is a mystery," said Dr. Gaster.

"Not to launch into the question of final causes," said Mr. Escot, helping himself at the same time to a slice of beef, "concerning which I will candidly acknowledge I am as profoundly ignorant as the most dogmatical theologian possibly can be, I just wish to observe that the pure and peaceful manners which Homer ascribes to the Lotophagi, and which at this day characterize many nations (the Hindoos, for example, who subsist exclusively on the fruits of the earth), depose very strongly in favour of a vegetable regimen."

"It may be said, on the contrary," said Mr. Foster, "that animal food acts on the mind as manure does on flowers, forcing them into a degree of expansion they would not otherwise have attained If we can imagine a philosophical auricula falling into a train of theoretical meditation on its original and natural nutriment, till it should work itself up into a profound abomination of bullock's blood, sugar-bakers' scum, and other *unnatural* ingredients of that rich composition of soil which had brought it to perfection, and insist on being planted in common earth, it would have all the advantage of natural theory on its side that the most strenuous advocate of the vegetable system could desire; but it would soon discover the practical error of its retrograde experiment by its lamentable inferiority in strength and beauty to all the auriculas around it. I am afraid, in some instances at least, this analogy holds true with respect to mind. No one will make a comparison, in point of mental power, between the Hindoos and the ancient Greeks."

"The anatomy of the human stomach," said Mr. Escot, "and the formation of the teeth, clearly place man in the class of frugivorous animals."

"Many anatomists," said Mr. Foster, "are of a different opinion, and agree in discerning the characteristics of the carnivorous classes."

"I am no anatomist," said Mr. Jenkison, "and cannot decide, where doctors disagree, in the meantime I conclude that man is omnivorous, and on that conclusion I act."

"Your conclusion is truly orthodox," said the Reverend Doctor Gaster "indeed the loaves and fishes are typical of a mixed diet; and the practice of the Church in all ages shows——"

"That it never loses sight of the loaves and fishes," said Mr. Escot.

"It never loses sight of any point of sound doctrine," said the reverend doctor.

The coachman now informed them their time was elapsed, nor could all the pathetic remonstrances of the reverend divine, who declared that he had not half breakfasted, succeed in gaining one minute from the inexorable Jehu.

"You will allow," said Mr. Foster, as soon as they were again in motion, "that the wild man of the woods could not transport himself over two hundred miles of forest with as much facility as one of these vehicles transports you and me through the heart of this cultivated country."

"I am certain," said Mr. Escot, "that a wild man can travel an immense distance without fatigue; but what is the advantage of locomotion? The wild man is happy in one spot, and there he remains: the civilized man is wretched in every place he happens to be in, and then congratulates himself on being accommodated with a machine, that will whirl him to another, where he will be just as miserable as ever."

We shall now leave the mail-coach to find its way to Capel Cerig, the nearest point of the Holyhead road to the dwelling of Squire Headlong.

[*The guests begin to arrive at Headlong Hall. In addition to those we have already met, they include "two very profound critics, Mr. Gall and Mr. Treacle," and "two very multitudinous versifiers, Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel"; the lovely Miss Cephalis Cranium, who flies "to the arms of her dear friend Caprioletta, with all that warmth of friendship which young ladies usually assume towards each other in the presence of young gentlemen"; and Mr. Panscope, "the chemical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, metaphysical, meteorological, galvanistical, musical, pictorial, bibliographical, critical philosopher, who had run through the whole circle of the sciences, and understood them all equally well."*]

From Natural Man to Literary Critics and Back

The sun was now terminating his diurnal course, and the lights were glittering on the festal board. When the ladies had retired, and the Burgundy had taken two or three tours of the table, the following conversation took place:—

SQUIRE HEADLONG. Push about the bottle: Mr. Escot, it stands with you. No heeltaps. As to skylight, liberty-hall.

MR. MAC LAUREL. Really, Squire Headlong, this is the vara nactar itsel. Ye hae saretainly descovered the tarrestrial paradise, but it flows wi' a better leecor than milk an' honey.

THE REV. DOCTOR GASTER. Hem! Mr. Mac Laurel! there is a degree of profaneness in that observation, which I should not have looked for in so stanch a supporter of Church and State. Milk and honey was the pure food of the antediluvian patriarchs, who knew not the use of the grape, happily for them. *Tossing off a bumper of Burgundy*

MR. ESCOT. Happily, indeed! The first inhabitants of the world knew not the use either of wine or animal food, it is, therefore, by no means incredible that they lived to the age of several centuries, free from war, and commerce, and arbitrary government, and every other species of desolating wickedness. But man was then a very different animal to what he now is: he had not the faculty of speech; he was not encumbered with clothes, he lived in the open air; his first step out of which, as Hamlet truly observes, is *into his grave*. His first dwellings, of course, were the hollows of trees and rocks. In process of time he began to build. thence grew villages; thence grew cities. Luxury, oppression, poverty, misery, and disease kept pace with the progress of his pretended improvements, till, from a free, strong, healthy, peaceful animal, he has become a weak, distempered, cruel, carnivorous slave.

THE REV. DOCTOR GASTER. Your doctrine is orthodox, in so far as you assert that the original man was not encumbered with clothes, and that he lived in the open air, but, as to the faculty of speech, that, it is certain, he had, for the authority of Moses—

MR. ESCOT. Of course, sir, I do not presume to dissent from the very exalted authority of that most enlightened astronomer and profound cosmogonist, who had, moreover, the advantage of being inspired, but when I indulge myself with a ramble in the fields of speculation, and attempt to deduce what is probable and rational from the sources of analysis, experience, and comparison, I confess I am too often apt to lose sight of the doctrines of that great fountain of theological and geological philosophy.

SQUIRE HEADLONG. Push about the bottle.

MR. FOSTER. Do you suppose the mere animal life of a wild man, living on acorns, and sleeping on the ground, comparable in felicity to that of Newton, ranging through unlimited space, and penetrating into the arcana of universal motion—to that of a Locke, unravelling the labyrinth of mind—to that of a Lavoisier, detecting the minutest combinations of matter, and reducing all nature to its elements—to that of a Shakespeare, piercing and developing the springs of passion—or of a Milton, identifying himself, as it were, with the beings of an invisible world?

MR. ESCOT. You suppose extreme cases: but, on the score of happiness, what comparison can you make between the tranquil being of the wild man of the woods and the wretched and turbulent existence of Milton, the victim of persecution, poverty, blindness, and neglect? The records of literature demonstrate that Happiness and Intelligence are seldom sisters. Even if it were otherwise, it would prove nothing. The many are always sacrificed to the few. Where one man advances, hundreds retrograde; and the balance is always in favour of universal deterioration.

MR. FOSTER. Virtue is independent of external circumstances. The exalted understanding looks into the truth of things, and, in its own peaceful contemplations, rises superior to the world. No philosopher would resign his mental acquisitions for the purchase of any terrestrial good.

MR. ESCOT. In other words, no man whatever would resign his identity, which is nothing more than the consciousness of his perceptions, as the price of any acquisition. But every man, without exception, would willingly effect a very material change in his relative situation to other individuals. Unluckily for the rest of your argument, the understanding of literary people is for the most part *exalted,* as you express it, not so much by the love of truth and virtue, as by arrogance and self-sufficiency; and there is, perhaps, less disinterestedness, less liberality, less general benevolence, and more envy, hatred, and uncharitableness among them, than among any other description of men.

The eye of Mr. Escot, as he pronounced these words, rested very innocently and unintentionally on Mr. Gall.

MR. GALL. You allude, sir, I presume, to my review.

MR. ESCOT. Pardon me, sir. You will be convinced it is impossible I can allude to your review, when I assure you that I have never read a single page of it.

MR. GALL, MR. TREACLE, MR. NIGHTSHADE, AND MR. MAC LAUREL. Never read our review!!!!

MR. ESCOT. Never. I look on periodical criticism in general to be a species of shop where panegyric and defamation are sold, wholesale, retail, and for exportation. I am not inclined to be a purchaser of these commodities, or to encourage a trade which I consider pregnant with mischief.

MR. MAC LAUREL. I can readily conceive, sir, ye wou'd na wullinly encoorage ony dealer in panegeeric: but, frae the manner in which ye speak o' the first creetics an' scholars o' the age, I shou'd think you wou'd hae a leetle mair predilaction for deefamation.

MR. ESCOT. I have no predilection, sir, for defamation. I make a point of speaking the truth on all occasions; and it seldom happens that the truth can be spoken without some stricken deer pronouncing it a libel.

MR. NIGHTSHADE. You are, perhaps, sir, an enemy to literature in general?

MR. ESCOT. If I were, sir, I should be a better friend to periodical critics.

SQUIRE HEADLONG. Buz!

MR. TREACLE. May I simply take the liberty to inquire into the basis of your objection?

MR. ESCOT. I conceive that periodical criticism disseminates superficial knowledge, and its perpetual adjunct, vanity; that it checks in the youthful mind the habit of thinking for itself; that it delivers partial opinions, and thereby misleads the judgment; that it is never conducted with a view to the general interests of literature, but to serve the interested ends of individuals, and the miserable purposes of party. . . .

MR. PANSCOPE (*suddenly emerging from a deep reverie*). I have heard, with the most profound attention, everything which the gentleman on the other side of the table has thought proper to advance on the subject of human deterioration, and I must take the liberty to remark, that it augurs a very considerable degree of presumption in any individual to set himself up against the *authority* of so many great men, as may be marshalled in metaphysical phalanx under the opposite banners of the controversy; such as Aristotle, Plato, the scholiast on Aristophanes, St Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Athanasius, Orpheus, Pindar, Simonides, Gronovius, Hemsterhusius, Longinus, Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Paine, Doctor Paley, the King of Prussia, the King of Poland, Cicero, Monsieur Gautier, Hippocrates, Machiavelli, Milton, Colley Cibber, Bojardo, Gregory Nazianzenus, Locke, D'Alembert, Boccaccio, Daniel Defoe, Erasmus, Doctor Smollett, Zimmermann, Solomon, Confucius, Zoroaster, and Thomas-à-Kempis.

MR. ESCOT. I presume, sir, you are one of those who value an *authority* more than a reason.

MR. PANSCOPE. The *authority*, sir, of all these great men, whose works, as well as the whole of the Encyclopædia Britannica, the entire series of the Monthly Review, the complete set of the Variorum Classics, and the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions, I have read through from beginning to end, deposes, with irrefragable refutation, against your ratiocinative speculations, wherein you seem desirous, by the futile process of analytical dialectics, to subvert the pyramidal structure of synthetically deduced opinions, which have withstood the secular revolutions of physiological disquisition, and which I maintain to be transcendentally self-evident, categorically certain, and syllogistically demonstrable.

SQUIRE HEADLONG. Bravo! Pass the bottle. The very best speech that ever was made.

MR. ESCOT. It has only the slight disadvantage of being unintelligible.

MR. PANSCOPE. I am not obliged, sir, as Dr. Johnson observed on a similar occasion, to furnish you with an understanding.

MR. ESCOT. I fear, sir, you would have some difficulty in furnishing me with such an article from your own stock.

MR. PANSCOPE. 'Sdeath, sir, do you question my understanding?

MR. ESCOT. I only question, sir, where I expect a reply; which, from things that have no existence, I am not visionary enough to anticipate.

MR. PANSCOPE. I beg leave to observe, sir, that my language was perfectly perspicuous, and etymologically correct; and, I conceive, I have demonstrated what I shall now take the liberty to say in plain terms, that all your opinions are extremely absurd.

MR. ESCOT. I should be sorry, sir, to advance any opinion that you would not think absurd.

MR. PANSCOPE. Death and fury, sir—

MR. ESCOT. Say no more, sir. That apology is quite sufficient.

MR. PANSCOPE. Apology, sir?

MR. ESCOT. Even so, sir. You have lost your temper, which I consider equivalent to a confession that you have the worst of the argument.

MR. PANSCOPE. Lightning and devils! sir—

SQUIRE HEADLONG. No civil war!—Temperance in the name of Bacchus!—A glee! a glee! *Music has charms to bend the knotted oak.* Sir Patrick, you'll join?

SIR PATRICK O'PRISM. Troth, with all my heart: for, by my soul, I'm bothered completely.

SQUIRE HEADLONG. Agreed, then: you, and I, and Chromatic. Bumpers!—bumpers! Come, strike up.

Squire Headlong, Mr. Chromatic, and Sir Patrick O'Prism, each holding a bumper, immediately vociferated the following

GLEE

A heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!
So fill me a bumper, a bumper of claret!
Let the bottle pass freely, don't shirk it nor spare it,
For a heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!

No skylight! no twilight! while Bacchus rules o'er us:
No thinking! no shrinking! all drinking in chorus:
Let us moisten our clay, since 't is thirsty and porous:
No thinking! no shrinking! all drinking in chorus!

GRAND CHORUS

y Squire Headlong, Mr. Chromatic, Sir Patrick O'Prism, Mr. Panscope, r. Jenkison, Mr. Gall, Mr. Treacle, Mr. Nightshade, Mr. Mac Laurel, Mr. ranium, Mr. Milestone, and the Reverend Doctor Gaster.

A heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!
So fill me a bumper, a bumper of claret!
Let the bottle pass freely, don't shirk it nor spare it,
For a heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!

LORD BYRON: CRUDE SNEER AND WILD SPLENDOR



BYRON MIGHT *have been one of the great satiric poets. He was in fact the greatest poetic satirist of his time. He had, as Goethe said, daring, speed, and grandeur. He had, fused with and straining against his romantic sensibility, an eighteenth-century feeling for clarity and sanity; his mind was a landscape of wild mountain heights and blue waters lit by fulgurations of wit. His unbelievable energies blew up absurdities into such monstrous and whirling shapes of nonsense that it was as if the heavens themselves were involved in a tumultuous harlequinade. Indignation erupted out of that glowering breast until the air was fetid with sulphurous emanations and dark with dreadful masses. So endowed, he might have been at once the Aristophanes and the Juvenal of his age.*

But no great poet and great satirist was ever so undisciplined. He under-

stood the great virtues of order and control—no other writer of his day praised Pope and Dryden more warmly—but his own life was a tangle of disorder, and his poetry, produced at top speed on the spur of inspiration, fell into whatever shape impulse gave it. Childe Harold *and* Don Juan *are typical dark gloom, luminous description, romantic adventure, lofty thought, theatrical tinsel, pensive sincerity, all melting shapelessly into one another, with no pattern and no destination, glancing from frivolity to bitter fire. Either might say anything, attack anything, in hilarity or hatred, on any grounds, true or false, pique or principle.*

"You ask me," Byron wrote his publisher Murray in 1819, "for the plan of Donny Johnny I have *no plan;* I had *no plan; but I had or have materials; though if, like Tony Lumpkin, I am 'to be snubbed so when I am in spirits' the poem will be naught, and the poet turn serious again. . . . Do you suppose that I could have any intention but to giggle and make giggle? —a playful satire, with as little poetry as could be helped . . ."*

No wonder he writes with careless exuberance

> *All are not moralists like Southey, when*
> *He prated to the world of "Pantisocracy";*
> *Or Wordsworth, unexcised, unhired, who then*
> *Seasoned his pedlar poems with democracy*

Byron never wearies of jibing at "all the Lakers, in and out of place," whose political tune has changed from Liberal to Tory. Southey, we observe, "prates" morality; Wordsworth has been "hired" with a government appointment in the Excise, and therefore his vulgar poems (about peddlers, leech-gatherers, and beggars) are no longer "seasoned" with the democracy that was once a part of their recipe. Now, amusing as much of this is, most of it is both frivolous and unjust Byron is snobbish and silly to imply that because Wordsworth's poems are about common people they cannot be good. His imputations against Wordsworth's honesty are false and low. We may not sympathize with Wordsworth's later views, but it is absurd to suggest that his earlier poems were insincere or that the author of Tintern Abbey *was bribed by a political appointment. When Byron tries to make us swallow such slanders we may laugh with his wit but we reject his message*

When he desists from attributing venal motives, however, and just states the facts, his satire becomes great with power:

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appealed to the Avenger, Time,
If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word Miltonic mean sublime,
He deigned not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turned his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

Thinkst thou, could he—the blind Old Man—arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes
And heartless daughters—worn—and pale—and poor;
Would he adore a sultan? he *obey*
The intellectual eunuch, Castlereagh?

The grandeur of Milton's courage, then the genuine terror in the vision of Samuel rising from the grave, and the tragic pathos in the picture of the aged Milton, with "those helpless eyes and heartless daughters," swell irresistibly into just and terrible scorn.

For the most part, however, Don Juan *is only a devil-may-care medley, with half a hundred* non sequiturs, *tomfooleries, and libels for every hundred strokes of truth, insight, and nobility. The later cantos, with their high-spirited stanzas on British snobbery, social corruption, and cant, are far more balanced than the earlier ones in which he had not yet worked off his personal prejudices and grudges. But even so, the poem is like a stable of race horses galloping off in all directions. We hear a thunder of splendid hoofs, feel a wild, exultant urgency—to adapt an image of Humbert Wolfe's—but we reach no goal. The fierce velocity with which Byron has been going everywhere at once is merely the result of a vitality that exceeds the speed limit of thought.*

The Vision of Judgment *is the greatest and most daring of his satiric poems. Its unique achievement is something that no one but Byron has done: the fusion of satire with the sense of grandeur. The Powers of Light and Darkness are brought together; and pass judgment on human evil and human folly. There confront each other the Archangel Michael,*

A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,

and Lucifer—

Eternal wrath on his immortal face
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space—

the great antagonists almost renew their eternal war—and then the squeaking ludicrous insignificance of the human stake, as pompously presented by its own laureate, dissolves "the whole spiritual show," angels, ghosts, and devils sent off screaming! Only in a technical sense are George III and Robert Southey the victims of the satire. The true theme is the pettiness of both king and poet, the triviality of wrong and of fame its venal minstrel, in the light of eternity. Southey, after all the "melodious twang" of his imbecile muse, is dismissed with no more than a ducking in his own lake King George sneaks into heaven in the tumult, and is last seen "practising the hundredth psalm" No more magnificent a contrast of splendor and pettiness was ever devised by any satirist.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

*** The poem was published in 1821 ***

Heaven and Hell Contend for the Soul of George III. But Are Put to Flight by Southey's Poetry

I

SAINT PETER sat by the celestial gate:
  His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late,
  Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight"
  The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And "a pull altogether," as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,
  And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
  Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
  Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
  Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
  Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
  With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

The Vision of Judgment

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no doubt,
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

. . . . .

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third, although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died—but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad—and t'other no less blind.

IX

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
His burial made some pomp, there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
There throbb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall,
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

. . . . .

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys, when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late—
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame,
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, "There's another star gone out, I think!"

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes—
At which Saint Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose:
"Saint porter," said the angel, "prithee rise!"
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes:
To which the saint replied, "Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?" •

XVIII

"No," quoth the cherub, "George the Third is dead."
"And who *is* George the Third?" replied the apostle:
"*What George? what Third?*" "The king of England," said
The angel. "Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way, but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

XIX

"He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

XX

"And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by Saint Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenù! The skin
Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head."

. . . . .

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

. . . . .

XXVIII

[Then] from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

. . . . .

XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their "champ clos" the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that the "sons of God," like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 'twould take up hours.

. . . . .

XXXVI

The Archangel bowed, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turned as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

. . . . .

XXXVIII

Michael began: "What wouldst thou with this man,
  Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
  That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
  He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine, if not, let him have way."

XXXIX

"Michael!" replied the Prince of Air, "even here
  Before the gate of Him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
  That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
  To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses, yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

XL

"Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine;* it was,
  Once, more thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest, nor, alas!
  Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
  In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings,—

. . . . .

XLII

"Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
  When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
  The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
  Of ocean call'd him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time,
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

XLIII

"He came to his sceptre young, he leaves it old:
  Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
  How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
  The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

" 'Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
  (I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
  Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
  Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsars' school,
Take the worst pupil, and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

XLV

"He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
  Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word 'Liberty!'
  Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
  With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI

"I know he was a constant consort; own
  He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
  As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
  I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

XLVII

"The New World shook him off, the Old yet groans
  Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
  To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues, drones
  Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth, but let them quake!"

. . . . .

[*Witnesses are called to testify to the King's misdeeds, among them the "merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite" of John Wilkes.*]

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
  Assembled, and exclaim'd, "My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds,
  So let's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
  And 'tis for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?"

LXVIII

"Sir," replied Michael, "you mistake; these things
  Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
  Is the tribunal met: so now you know."
"Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,"
  Said Wilkes, "are cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?"

LXIX

"He is what you behold him, and his doom
  Depends upon his deeds," the Angel said;
"If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
  Gives license to the humblest beggar's head

To lift itself against the loftiest."—"Some,"
  Said Wilkes, "don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun."

LXX

"*Above* the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
  To urge against him," said the Archangel. "Why,"
Replied the spirit, "since old scores are past,
  Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
  With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

LXXI

"Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
  A poor unlucky devil without a shilling,
But then I blame the man himself much less
  Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
  Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his *habeas corpus* into heaven."

. . . . .

[*In the midst of the testimony, Robert Southey bursts in, and insists o reading his own* Vision of Judgment *to them.*]

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, "I know this man of old,
  And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
  Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
  Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord."

. . . . .

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

. . . . .

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service, and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion·
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, "What! what!
Pye come again? No more—no more of that!"

XCIII

The tumult grew, an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried "Off, off!"
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

. . . . .

XCVI

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling, 'twas his way
Upon all topics, 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 'twould delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works—he would but cite a few—
"Wat Tyler"—"Rhymes on Blenheim"—"Waterloo."

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever,
Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin—
Had turn'd his coat—and would have turn'd his skin.

. . . . .

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, saints,
Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his "melodious twang."

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell;
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions,
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions—
(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump—but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
And at the fifth line knocked the poet down;
Who fell like Phaethon, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom—like his works,
  But soon rose to the surface—like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like corks,
  By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass. he lurks,
  It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision,"
As Welborn says—"the devil turn'd precisian."

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
  Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
  And show'd me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
  Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

gluttony of his New York boardinghouse, or the admiration for successful swindling and the menacing resentment of criticism among the settlers of Eden. The single cultivated family Martin meets, the genteel Norrises, enlarge "upon the inestimable advantages of having no such arbitrary distinctions" in rank as viscounts and dukes, and are nevertheless avid with curiosity about the whole British peerage, and exhilarated by a numerous personal acquaintance therein. "And do I then," cries their friend General Fladdock, returning from abroad, "once again behold the choicest spirits of my country?" "Yes," replies Mr. Norris. "Here we are, General."

The most wonderful thing in Martin Chuzzlewit, *however, is Seth Pecksniff. Mr. Pecksniff is a prodigious feat of imaginative energy, a great satiric creation. He is Tartuffe, shorn of his alarming and satanic power, and translated into the world of Mrs. Grundy, the bourgeois hypocrisy of* Victorian England. *Dickens elaborates him with joyful zest, from our very first glimpse of his moral throat beheld "over a very low fence of white cravat," "a valley between two jutting heights of collar, serene and whiskerless," that seemed to say, "There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen, all is peace, a holy calm pervades me."* Mr. *Pecksniff making playful moral reflections before his daughters "with a kind of saintly waggishness";* Mr. *Pecksniff looking not so much "as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth," but rather as if "any quantity of butter might have been made out of him, by churning the milk of human kindness, as it spouts upwards from his heart";* Mr. *Pecksniff meekly forgiving old* Martin Chuzzlewit *for striking him "with a walking stick (which I have every reason to believe has knobs upon it) on that delicate and exquisite portion of the human anatomy—the brain": in all these and in a thousand other angles from which Dickens illustrates him, he is always outrageous and always himself, forever the same and forever a rich surprise.*

The virtuosity with which Dickens accomplishes this feat is a triumph of the burlesque method and a triumph of pure literary skill. For there is no notion more groundless than that Dickens is a careless writer, slapdash in language and slipshod in structure. His novels are if anything excessive in their ingenuity of plotting, and their verbal brilliance is breath-taking. What will Mr. *Pecksniff say, let us ask, to an erroneous but well-meant effort to supply him with a word that has eluded his memory? The reader might amuse himself trying to invent an appropriate reply for him, and then compare his own solution with Dickens'. "The name of those fabulous animals (pagan, I regret to say)," Mr. Pecksniff apologizes, "who*

"Europian not to know," said Chollop, smoking placidly. "Europian quite!"

After a short devotion to the interests of the magic circle, he resumed the conversation by observing:

"You won't half feel yourself at home in Eden, now?"

"No," said Mark, "I don't."

"You miss the imposts of your country. You miss the house dues?" observed Chollop.

"And the houses—rather," said Mark.

"No window dues here, sir," observed Chollop.

"And no windows to put 'em on," said Mark.

"No stakes, no dungeons, no blocks, no racks, no scaffolds, no thumbscrews, no pikes, no pillories," said Chollop.

"Nothing but rewolwers and bowie-knives," returned Mark. "And what are they? Not worth mentioning!"

The man who had met them on the night of their arrival came crawling up at this juncture, and looked in at the door.

"Well, sir," said Chollop. "How do *you* git along?"

He had considerable difficulty in getting along at all, and said as much in reply.

"Mr. Co. And me, sir," observed Chollop, "are disputating a piece. He ought to be slicked up pretty smart to disputate between the Old World and the New, I do expect?"

"Well!" returned the miserable shadow. "So he had."

"I was merely observing, sir," said Mark, addressing this new visitor, "that I looked upon the city in which we have the honour to live, as being swampy. What's your sentiments?"

"I opinionate it's moist perhaps, at certain times," returned the man.

"But not as moist as England, sir?" cried Chollop, with a fierce expression in his face.

"Oh! Not as moist as England, let alone its Institutions," said the man.

"I should hope there ain't a swamp in all Americay, as don't whip *that* small island into mush and molasses," observed Chollop, decisively. "You bought slick, straight, and right away, of Scadder, sir?" to Mark.

He answered in the affirmative. Mr. Chollop winked at the other citizen.

"Scadder is a smart man, sir? He is a rising man? He is a man as will come up'ards, right side up, sir?" Mr. Chollop winked again at the other citizen.

"He should have his right side very high up, if I had my way," said Mark. "As high up as the top of a good tall gallows, perhaps."

Mr. Chollop was so delighted at the smartness of his excellent countryman having been too much for the Britisher, and at the Britisher's resenting it,

that he could contain himself no longer, and broke forth in a shout of delight. But the strangest exposition of this ruling passion was in the other: the pestilence-stricken, broken, miserable shadow of a man: who derived so much entertainment from the circumstance that he seemed to forget his own ruin in thinking of it, and laughed outright when he said "that Scadder was a smart man, and had draw'd a lot of British capital that way, as sure as sun-up."

After a full enjoyment of this joke, Mr. Hannibal Chollop sat smoking and improving the circle, without making any attempts either to converse or to take leave; apparently labouring under the not uncommon delusion that for a free and enlightened citizen of the United States to convert another man's house into a spittoon for two or three hours together, was a delicate attention, full of interest and politeness, of which nobody could ever tire. At last he rose.

"I am a-going easy," he observed.

Mark entreated him to take particular care of himself.

"Afore I go," he said sternly, "I have got a leetle word to say to you. You are darnnation 'cute, you are."

Mark thanked him for the compliment.

"But you are much too 'cute to last. I can't con-ceive of any spotted Painter in the bush, as ever was so riddled through and through as you will be, I bet."

"What for?" asked Mark.

"We must be cracked-up, sir," retorted Chollop, in a tone of menace "You are not now in A despotic land. We are a model to the airth, and must be jist cracked-up, I tell you."

"What! I speak too free, do I?" cried Mark.

"I have draw'd upon A man, and fired upon A man for less," said Chollop, frowning. "I have know'd strong men obleeged to make themselves uncommon skase for less. I have know'd men Lynched for less, and beaten into punkin'-sarse for less, by an enlightened people. We are the intellect and virtue of the airth, the cream Of human natur', and the flower Of moral force. Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked-up, or they rises, and we snarls. We shows our teeth, I tell you, fierce. You'd better crack us up, you had!"

After the delivery of this caution, Mr. Chollop departed; with Ripper, Tickler, and the revolvers, all ready for action on the shortest notice.

THACKERAY EXPOSES FASHIONABLE SOCIETY



WHETHER IN Henry Esmond's time or Colonel Newcome's, the world Thackeray reveals is always one single world, that of birth, bank balances, and social position. Dickens, in the titanic exuberance of his creative energy, seems to pour the whole nineteenth century before us in one torrential flow, Thackeray fastens upon a selected part of it, bears down upon its landed estates and town houses, lifts off the roofs, and studies the inhabitants, analyzing the ruling forces of their lives.

The very settings of the two novelists reflect their differences. When we remember Dickens, an extraordinary host of places rushes into our minds· the wharves and warehouses and clustering masts and river slime of London's tidal basin, blazing fires in tavern parlors, rook-filled cathedral closes, the cellars and thieves' kitchens of urban slums, canal locks and country roads, dressmakers' shops, theatrical boardinghouses, lawyers' chambers, the Fleet and Marshalsea, Christmas jollifications in rural halls and poor clerks' lodgings, factories, cold city mansions, orphanages, banks, dust heaps, mills, countinghouses, cottages with twinkling panes and shining doorknobs—the variety and profusion of life itself.

Thackeray

The scenes from Thackeray that gleam in memory are the ballrooms of Brussels and the field of Waterloo after the battle, Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies, the neat box-dwelling of Major Pendennis, Mr. Osborne's ornate mansion and the comfortable Sedley home, Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's bright drawing room in Mayfair, the candles shining on the broad stairway at Castlewood, Miss Crawley's town residence in Park Lane and the Reverend Bute's country parsonage, Colonel Newcome's house in Fitzroy Square, the Opera, Bath, the disordered rooms and long avenue at Queen's Crawley. Though Thackeray wrote only one novel called Vanity Fair, *that might be the generic title of all his work. His magnetic needle hardly wavers from that glittering center of worldly attraction.*

Thackeray's entire portrayal of society might have been designed to illustrate Veblen's theses of invidious display and the performance of leisure. Conspicuous consumption, titles, wealth, reputable notoriety, these are the goals. Everything rotates around, everything is dominated by them. Mankind divides into their adepts, aspirants, dependents, parasites. They are the worldly paradise. How glorious are the feet of the Lord Steynes, Pitt Crawleys, Lord Southdowns, and Lady Bareacres who dwell in this select Olympus by right of blue blood or gold! On the slopes below are lesser deities, and candidates struggling for admission: Blenkinsops, the bankers; Jenkinses, Commissioners of the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office; old Mr. Osborne trying to blot out the taint of his beginnings in trade by buying his son a captaincy in a line regiment; George Osborne being despised and fleeced by the younger sons of titled families who are his fellow officers; and in turn patronizing William Dobbin, son of a prosperous greengrocer. There are the Raggleses, Bowlses, Briggses.—butlers, footmen, companions, housekeepers, chambermaids, washerwomen, caterers, tradesmen—all the retainers who supply and serve their superiors. There are the soiled ladies and adventuresses, the gamblers and adventurers, who prey on the fringes: the Honorable Frederic Deuceace, "lovely, daring Mrs. Mantrap," Captain Marker, "battered, brazen, beautiful, conscienceless, heartless Mrs. Firebrace, whose father died of her shame."

Pecuniary emulation and pecuniary snobbery are the dominant forces everywhere on display. Everyone spends; everyone longs to surpass his neighbor; everyone comments on his neighbor's scale of living and wonders how he does it; everyone reveres to the degree that the expenditure is splendid and despises as it declines into impecuniosity. The unforgivable

sin is to lose all your money. There are no bounds to old Mr. Osborne's rancor against Mr. Sedley when this former friend who gave him his own start in business is sold out of his comfortable home and sinks down into the ignominy of a dingy suburb. Among the aristocracy appearances must be kept up by whatever jugglery. Old Lady Bareacres manages to hang on, and retains her place in society; Deuceace flees his debts, goes abroad, and is forgotten. In the end, success is all that counts: nobody remembers any more that Lord Steyne won his marquisate at the gaming table.

Vanity is the keynote of the whole spectacle. The characteristic vices Thackeray sees in Vanity Fair *are vain and petty ones: selfishness, extravagance, gossip, backbiting, jealousy, envy. It is a cruel world, but the people in it are careless rather than cruel, small rather than sinister. They have no splendid vices and no hideous crimes. Their very pride is no towering satanic sin, but only snobbery, whose twin faces are ostentation and toadyism. Even the name of the Crawley family is symbolic, like their given names of Walpole, Bute, and Pitt under successive ministries. The inhabitants of Vanity Fair are insolent and swaggering in success, fawning for favors, ruthless to failure. They are willing to drink an upstart's wine and win his money at cards and sneer at him behind his back, eager to flatter a rich aunt to inherit her estate, no less ready to enslave their families with the fear of disinheritance and live luxurious in servility. They will stoop to almost any meanness.*

Their world is not, like that of Dickens, a glorious tilting ground of good and evil. Dickens was always seeing good in people, and when he could see no good in them, as if he could not bear to call them men, he makes them monsters of iniquity or uproarious grotesques. There are comical people in Thackeray, some of them grotesque, but no such wonderful and outrageous animations of absurdity as Sairey Gamp and Mr. Jingle. Even poor lonely awkward Jos Sedley, little more than a compound of curry powder, Indian rupees, pigeon heart, and pendulous belly, has glimmers of complexity. There are people who do bad things in Thackeray, but no such personifications of evil as Quilp, Fagin, Uriah Heep, or the coldly self-righteous Murdstones. Almost the worst thing done in Vanity Fair *is Mr. Osborne's persecution of his former friend and benefactor, an offense of ingratitude. Thackeray sees no great sinners in the world, and few good people. Becky Sharp is not evil, she is only shrewd, greedy, and selfish, Amelia Sedley is not good, she is only soft, foolish, and ignorant. The clever little adventuress is hardly more ruthless in exploiting men than*

meek little Emmy in taking advantage of Dobbin's lifelong devotion. And the reader often finds Dobbin so tiresome and Amelia so insipid that he can't help feeling Thackeray wearied of them too. Certainly he knew that in their abasement before the idols each had made and worshiped they too dwelt in Vanity Fair.

Part of Thackeray's great success lies in the thronging plenitude and energy with which he has peopled this predatory world. Mayfair, Park Lane, Queen's Crawley, all the other places, there they stand, solid in red brick, stucco, and stone; and their men and women are no less real. Dirty squalid old Sir Pitt, domineering Mrs. Bute, frigid old Bareacres with her dismal eyes, Rawdon playing with little Rawdon in the garret of Curzon Street, the incomparable, gallant, heartless Rebecca shooting gleams of scornful humor out of her brilliant green eyes—how they live and move around us! What a superb study is made of Miss Crawley, the old Voltairean freethinker and gourmet, bullying her dependents with alternate whims of selfishness and generosity, gorging on lobster, turtle, and claret, reading her French novels, deriding convention, saying disobliging things about the Deity, and then terrified of His vengeance when indigestion revives the image of hell-fires! What a marvelously snarling glitter is contrived for the noble Marquis of Steyne, at once ferociously simian and polished as sin!

More than these triumphs, however, Thackeray convinces us that he comprehends these people, that he penetrates down into the last tortuous twists of their heartless egos. He is like a zoologist exhibiting the reflexes of the creatures he observes, a social scientist devising demonstrations of the general laws of "Society" and the protean manifestations of snobbery. But beneath the assured air of social omniscience and the imperturbability of the man of the world there are depths of warmer understanding, so that the lacquered detachment of surface is constantly being broken by surges of human drama. "For God's sake, Rawdy, don't wake mamma," Rawdon implores his son when he has hit his head wildly tossing him to the ceiling; and the child bites his lip and stifles his howl of pain. And in a more violent moment of climactic revelation, Rawdon surprises his wife alone with Lord Steyne. "I am innocent, Rawdon!" she cries in terror at his face; "I swear that I am innocent!" At such moments Thackeray proves that he knows not merely the corruptions of society but the surprises of the heart.

VANITY FAIR

*** *Vanity Fair* was first published in 1847-48. The selections given here are from Chapters 36 and 37 ***

How to Live Well on Nothing a Year

I SUPPOSE there is no man in this Vanity Fair of ours so little observant as not to think sometimes about the worldly affairs of his acquaintances, or so extremely charitable as not to wonder how his neighbour Jones, or his neighbour Smith, can make both ends meet at the end of the year. With the utmost regard for the family, for instance (for I dine with them twice or thrice in the season), I cannot but own that the appearance of the Jenkinses in the Park, in the large barouche with the grenadier-footmen, will surprise and mystify me to my dying day; for though I know the equipage is only jobbed, and all the Jenkins people are on board wages, yet those three men and the carriage must represent an expense of six hundred a year at the very least—and then there are the splendid dinners, the two boys at Eton, the prize governess and masters for the girls, the trip abroad, or to Eastbourne or Worthing, in the autumn, the annual ball with a supper from Gunter's (who, by the way, supplies most of the *first-rate* dinners which J gives, as I know very well, having been invited to one of them to fill a vacant place, when I saw at once that these repasts are very superior to the *common* run of entertainments for which the *humbler* sort of J.'s acquaintances get cards)—who, I say, with the most good-natured feelings in the world, can help wondering how the Jenkinses make out matters? What *is* Jenkins? We all know—Commissioner of the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, with £1200 a year for a salary. Had his wife a private fortune? Pooh!—Miss Flint—one of eleven children of a small squire in Buckinghamshire. All she ever gets from her family is a turkey at Christmas, in exchange for which she has to board two or three of her sisters in the off season; and lodge and feed her brothers when they come to town. How does Jenkins balance his income? I say, as every friend of his must say, How is it that he has not been outlawed long since, and that he ever came back (as he did to the surprise of everybody) last year from Boulogne?

"I" is here introduced to personify the world in general—the Mrs. Grundy of each respected reader's private circle—every one of whom can point to some families of his acquaintance who live nobody knows how. Many a glass of wine have we all of us drunk, I have very little doubt, hob-

and-nobbing with the hospitable giver, and wondering how the deuce he paid for it.

Some three or four years after his stay in Paris, when Rawdon Crawley and his wife were established in a very small comfortable house in Curzon Street, Mayfair, there was scarcely one of the numerous friends whom they entertained at dinner that did not ask the above question regarding them. The novelist, it has been said before, knows everything, and as I am in a situation to be able to tell the public how Crawley and his wife lived without any income, may I entreat the public newspapers which are in the habit of extracting portions of the various periodical works now published, not to reprint the following exact narrative and calculations—of which I ought, as the discoverer (and at some expense, too), to have the benefit? My son, I would say, were I blessed with a child—you may by deep inquiry and constant intercourse with him, learn how a man lives comfortably on nothing a year. But it is best not to be intimate with gentlemen of this profession, and to take the calculations at second-hand, as you do logarithms, for to work them yourself, depend upon it, will cost you something considerable.

In the first place, and as a matter of the greatest necessity, we are bound to describe how a house may be got for nothing a year. These mansions are to be had either unfurnished, where, if you have credit with Messrs. Gillows or Bantings, you can get them splendidly *montées* and decorated entirely according to your own fancy; or they are to be let furnished, a less troublesome and complicated arrangement to most parties. It was so that Crawley and his wife preferred to hire their house.

Before Mr. Bowls came to preside over Miss Crawley's house and cellar in Park Lane, that lady had had for a butler a Mr. Raggles, who was born on the family estate of Queen's Crawley, and indeed was a younger son of a gardener there. By good conduct, a handsome person and calves, and a grave demeanour, Raggles rose from the knifeboard to the footboard of the carriage; from the footboard to the butler's pantry. When he had been a certain number of years at the head of Miss Crawley's establishment, where he had had good wages, fat perquisites, and plenty of opportunities of saving, he announced that he was about to contract a matrimonial alliance with a late cook of Miss Crawley's, who had subsisted in an honourable manner by the exercise of a mangle, and the keeping of a small greengrocer's shop in the neighbourhood. The truth is, that the ceremony had been clandestinely performed some years back; although the news of Mr. Raggles' marriage was first brought to Miss Crawley by a little boy and girl of seven and eight years of age, whose continual presence in the kitchen had attracted the attention of Miss Briggs.

Mr. Raggles then retired and personally undertook the superintendence of the small shop and the greens. He added milk and cream, eggs, and country-fed pork to his stores, contenting himself, whilst other retired butlers were vending spirits in public-houses, by dealing in the simplest country produce. And having a good connection amongst the butlers in the neighbourhood, and a snug back parlour where he and Mrs. Raggles received them, his milk, cream, and eggs got to be adopted by many of the fraternity, and his profits increased every year. Year after year he quietly and modestly amassed money, and when at length that snug and complete bachelor's residence at No. 201 Curzon Street, Mayfair, lately the residence of the Honourable Frederic Deuceace, gone abroad, with its rich and appropriate furniture by the first makers, was brought to the hammer, who should go in and purchase the lease and furniture of the house but Charles Raggles? A part of the money he borrowed, it is true, and at rather a high interest, from a brother butler, but the chief part he paid down, and it was with no small pride that Mrs. Raggles found herself sleeping in a bed of carved mahogany, with silk curtains, with a prodigious cheval glass opposite to her, and a wardrobe which would contain her, and Raggles, and all the family.

Of course, they did not intend to occupy permanently an apartment so splendid. It was in order to let the house again that Raggles purchased it. As soon as a tenant was found, he subsided into the greengrocer's shop once more; but a happy thing it was for him to walk out of that tenement and into Curzon Street, and there survey his house—his own house—with geraniums in the window and a carved bronze knocker. The footman occasionally lounging at the area railing, treated him with respect; the cook took her green stuff at his house, and called him Mr. Landlord; and there was not one thing the tenant did, or one dish which they had for dinner, that Raggles might not know of, if he liked.

He was a good man; good and happy. The house brought him in so handsome a yearly income, that he was determined to send his children to good schools, and accordingly, regardless of expense, Charles was sent to boarding at Dr. Swishtail's, Sugarcane Lodge, and little Matilda to Miss Peckover's, Laurentinum House, Clapham.

Raggles loved and adored the Crawley family as the author of all his prosperity in life. He had a *silhouette* of his mistress in his back shop, and a drawing of the Porter's Lodge at Queen's Crawley, done by that spinster herself in India ink—and the only addition he made to the decorations of the Curzon Street house was a print of Queen's Crawley in Hampshire, the seat of Sir Walpole Crawley, Baronet, who was represented in a gilded car drawn by six white horses, and passing by a lake covered with swans, and barges containing ladies in hoops, and musicians with flags and periwigs.

Indeed, Raggles thought there was no such palace in all the world, and no such august family.

As luck would have it, Raggles' house in Curzon Street was to let when Rawdon and his wife returned to London. The Colonel knew it and its owner quite well; the latter's connection with the Crawley family had been kept up constantly, for Raggles helped Mr. Bowls whenever Miss Crawley received friends. And the old man not only let his house to the Colonel, but officiated as his butler whenever he had company; Mrs. Raggles operating in the kitchen below, and sending up dinners of which old Miss Crawley herself might have approved. This was the way, then, Crawley got his house for nothing; for though Raggles had to pay taxes and rates, and the interest of the mortgage to the brother butler; and the insurance of his life; and the charges for his children at school; and the value of the meat and drink which his own family—and for a time that of Colonel Crawley too—consumed; and though the poor wretch was utterly ruined by the transaction, his children being flung on the streets, and himself driven into the Fleet Prison: yet somebody must pay even for gentlemen who live for nothing a year—and so it was this unlucky Raggles was made the representative of Colonel Crawley's defective capital.

I wonder how many families are driven to roguery and to ruin by great practitioners in Crawley's way?—how many great noblemen rob their petty tradesmen, condescend to swindle their poor retainers out of wretched little sums, and cheat for a few shillings? When we read that a nobleman has left for the Continent, or that another noble nobleman has an execution in his house—and that one or other owes six or seven millions, the defeat seems glorious even, and we respect the victim in the vastness of his ruin. But who pities a poor barber who can't get his money for powdering the footmen's heads; or a poor carpenter who has ruined himself by fixing up ornaments and pavilions for my ladies' *déjeuner;* or the poor devil of a tailor whom the steward patronises, and who has pledged all he is worth and more, to get the liveries ready, which my lord has done him the honour to bespeak?—When the great house tumbles down, these miserable wretches fall under it unnoticed: as they say in the old legends, before a man goes to the devil himself, he sends plenty of other souls thither.

Rawdon and his wife generously gave their patronage to all such of Miss Crawley's tradesmen and purveyors as chose to serve them. Some were willing enough, especially the poor ones. It was wonderful to see the pertinacity with which the washerwoman from Tooting brought the cart every Saturday, and her bills week after week. Mr. Raggles himself had to supply the greengroceries. The bill for servants' porter at the Fortune of War public-house is a curiosity in the chronicles of beer. Every servant also was owed

the greater part of his wages, and thus kept up perforce an interest in the house. Nobody in fact was paid. Not the blacksmith who opened the lock; not the glazier who mended the pane; nor the jobber who let the carriage; nor the groom who drove it; nor the butcher who provided the leg of mutton; nor the coals which roasted it; nor the cook who basted it, nor the servants who ate it: and this I am given to understand is not unfrequently the way in which people live elegantly on nothing a year.

In a little town such things cannot be done without remark We know there the quantity of milk our neighbour takes, and espy the joint or the fowls which are going in for his dinner. So, probably, 200 and 202 in Curzon Street might know what was going on in the house between them, the servants communicating through the area-railings; but Crawley and his wife and his friends did not know 200 and 202. When you came to 201 there was a hearty welcome, a kind smile, a good dinner, and a jolly shake of the hand from the host and hostess there, just for all the world as if they had been undisputed masters of three or four thousand a year—and so they were, not in money, but in produce and labour—if they did not pay for the mutton, they had it; if they did not give bullion in exchange for their wine, how should we know? Never was better claret at any man's table than at honest Rawdon's; dinners more gay and neatly served. His drawing-rooms were the prettiest little modest salons conceivable: they were decorated with the greatest taste, and a thousand nicknacks from Paris, by Rebecca; and when she sate at her piano trilling songs with a lightsome heart, the stranger voted himself in a little paradise of domestic comfort, and agreed that, if the husband was rather stupid, the wife was charming, and the dinners the pleasantest in the world.

Rebecca's wit, cleverness, and flippancy made her speedily the vogue in London among a certain class. You saw demure chariots at her door, out of which stepped very great people. You beheld her carriage in the Park, surrounded by dandies of note. The little box in the third tier of the Opera was crowded with heads constantly changing, but it must be confessed that the ladies held aloof from her, and that their doors were shut to our little adventurer.

With regard to the world of female fashion and its customs, the present writer of course can only speak at second-hand. A man can no more penetrate or understand those mysteries than he can know what the ladies talk about when they go upstairs after dinner. It is only by inquiry and perseverance, that one sometimes gets hints of those secrets, and by a similar diligence every person who treads the Pall Mall pavement and frequents the clubs of this metropolis, knows, either through his own experience or through some acquaintance with whom he plays at billiards or shares the

joint, something about the genteel world of London, and how, as there are men (such as Rawdon Crawley, whose position we mentioned before), who cut a good figure to the eyes of the ignorant world and to the apprentices in the Park, who behold them consorting with the most notorious dandies there, so there are ladies, who may be called men's women, being welcomed entirely by all the gentlemen, and cut or slighted by all their wives. Mrs. Firebrace is of this sort; the lady with the beautiful fair ringlets whom you see every day in Hyde Park, surrounded by the greatest and most famous dandies of this empire. Mrs. Rockwood is another, whose parties are announced laboriously in the fashionable newspapers, and with whom you see that all sorts of ambassadors and great noblemen dine; and many more might be mentioned had they to do with the history at present in hand. But while simple folks who are out of the world, or country people with a taste for the genteel, behold these ladies in their seeming glory in public places, or envy them from afar off, persons who are better instructed could inform them that these envied ladies have no more chance of establishing themselves in "Society," than the benighted squire's wife in Somersetshire, who reads of their doing in the *Morning Post*. Men living about London are aware of these awful truths. You hear how pitilessly many ladies of seeming rank and wealth are excluded from this "Society." The frantic efforts which they make to enter this circle, the meannesses to which they submit, the insults which they undergo, are matters of wonder to those who take human or woman kind for a study, and the pursuit of fashion under difficulties would be a fine theme for any very great person who had the wit, the leisure, and the knowledge of the English language necessary for the compiling of such a history.

Now the few female acquaintances whom Mrs. Crawley had known abroad, not only declined to visit her when she came to this side of the Channel, but cut her severely when they met in public places. It was curious to see how the great ladies forgot her, and no doubt not altogether a pleasant study to Rebecca. When Lady Bareacres met her in the waiting-room at the Opera, she gathered her daughters about her as if they would be contaminated by a touch of Becky, and retreating a step or two, placed herself in front of them, and stared at her little enemy. To stare Becky out of countenance required a severer glance than even the frigid old Bareacres could shoot out of her dismal eyes. When Lady de la Mole, who had ridden a score of times by Becky's side at Brussels, met Mrs. Crawley's open carriage in Hyde Park, her Ladyship was quite blind, and could not in the least recognise her former friend. Even Mrs. Blenkinsop, the banker's wife, cut her at church. Becky went regularly to church now; it was edifying to see her enter there with Rawdon by her side, carrying a couple of large gilt prayer-

books, and afterwards going through the ceremony with the gravest resignation.

An article as necessary to a lady in this position as her brougham or her bouquet, is her companion. I have always admired the way in which the tender creatures, who cannot exist without sympathy, hire an exceedingly plain friend of their own sex from whom they are almost inseparable. The sight of that inevitable woman in her faded gown seated behind her dear friend in the opera-box, or occupying the back seat of the barouche, is always a wholesome and moral one to me, as jolly a reminder as that of the Death's-head which figured in the repasts of Egyptian *bons vivants*, a strange sardonic memorial of Vanity Fair. What?—even battered, brazen, beautiful, conscienceless, heartless Mrs. Firebrace, whose father died of her shame. even lovely, daring Mrs. Mantrap, who will ride at any fence which any man in England will take, and who drives her greys in the Park, while her mother keeps a huckster's stall in Bath still;—even those who are so bold, one might fancy they could face anything, dare not face the world without a female friend. They must have somebody to cling to, the affectionate creatures! And you will hardly see them in any public place without a shabby companion in a dyed silk, sitting somewhere in the shade close behind them

"Rawdon," said Becky, very late one night, as a party of gentlemen were seated round her crackling drawing-room fire (for the men came to her house to finish the night; and she had ice and coffee for them, the best in London): "I must have a sheep-dog."

"A what?" said Rawdon, looking up from an *écarte* table.

"A sheep-dog!" said young Lord Southdown. "My dear Mrs Crawley, what a fancy! Why not have a Danish dog? I know of one as big as a camel-leopard, by Jove. It would almost pull your brougham. Or a Persian greyhound, eh? (I propose, if you please), or a little pug that would go into one of Lord Steyne's snuff-boxes? There's a man at Bayswater got one with such a nose that you might,—I mark the king and play,—that you might hang your hat on it."

"I mark the trick," Rawdon gravely said He attended to his game commonly, and didn't much meddle with the conversation except when it was about horses and betting.

"What *can* you want with a shepherd's dog?" the lively little Southdown continued.

"I mean a *moral* shepherd's dog," said Becky, laughing, and looking up at Lord Steyne.

"What the devil's that?" said his Lordship

"A dog to keep the wolves off me," Rebecca continued. "A companion."

"Dear little innocent lamb, you want one," said the Marquis; and his jaw thrust out; and he began to grin hideously, his little eyes leering towards Rebecca.

The great Lord of Steyne was standing by the fire sipping coffee. The fire crackled and blazed pleasantly. There was a score of candles sparkling round the mantelpiece, in all sorts of quaint sconces, of gilt and bronze and porcelain. They lighted up Rebecca's figure to admiration, as she sate on a sofa covered with a pattern of gaudy flowers. She was in a pink dress, that looked as fresh as a rose; her dazzling white arms and shoulders were half-covered with a thin hazy scarf through which they sparkled; her hair hung in curls round her neck, one of her little feet peeped out from the fresh crisp folds of the silk: the prettiest little foot in the prettiest little sandal in the finest silk stocking in the world.

The candles lighted up Lord Steyne's shining bald head, which was fringed with red hair. He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little twinkling bloodshot eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and when he laughed, two white buck-teeth protruded themselves and glistened savagely in the midst of the grin. He had been dining with royal personages, and wore his garter and ribbon. A short man was his Lordship, broad-chested, and bow-legged, but proud of the fineness of his foot and ankle, and always caressing his garter-knee.

"And so the Shepherd is not enough," said he, "to defend his lambkin?"

"The Shepherd is too fond of playing at cards and going to his clubs," answered Becky, laughing.

" 'Gad, what a debauched Corydon!" said my Lord—"what a mouth for a pipe!"

"I take your three to two," here said Rawdon, at the card-table.

"Hark at Melibœus," snarled the noble Marquis; "he's pastorally occupied too: he's shearing a Southdown. What an innocent mutton, hey? Damme, what a snowy fleece!"

Rebecca's eyes shot out gleams of scornful humour. "My Lord," she said, "you are a knight of the Order." He had the collar round his neck, indeed—a gift of the restored Princes of Spain.

Lord Steyne in early life had been notorious for his daring and his success at play. He had sat up two days and two nights with Mr. Fox at hazard. He had won money of the most august personages of the realm: he had won his marquisate, it was said, at the gaming-table; but he did not like an allusion to those bygone *frédaines*. Rebecca saw the scowl gathering over his heavy brow.

She rose up from her sofa, and went and took his coffee-cup out of his hand with a little curtsey. "Yes," she said, "I must get a watchdog. But he

won't bark at *you.*" And, going into the other drawing-room, she sate down to the piano, and began to sing little French songs in such a charming, thrilling voice, that the mollified nobleman speedily followed her into that chamber, and might be seen nodding his head and bowing time over her

Rawdon and his friend meanwhile played *écarte* until they had enough. The Colonel won; but, say that he won ever so much and often, nights like these, which occurred many times in the week—his wife having all the talk and all the admiration, and he sitting silent without the circle, not comprehending a word of the jokes, the allusions, the mystical language within—must have been rather wearisome to the ex-dragoon.

"How is Mrs. Crawley's husband?" Lord Steyne used to say to him by way of a good-day when they met: and indeed that was now his avocation in life. He was Colonel Crawley no more. He was Mrs Crawley's husband.

About the little Rawdon, if nothing has been said all this while, it is because he is hidden upstairs in a garret somewhere or has crawled below into the kitchen for companionship His mother scarcely ever took notice of him He passed the days with his French *bonne* as long as that domestic remained in Mr. Crawley's family, and when the Frenchwoman went away, the little fellow, howling in the loneliness of the night, had compassion taken on him by a housemaid, who took him out of his solitary nursery into her bed in the garret hard by, and comforted him.

Rebecca, my Lord Steyne, and one or two more were in the drawing-room taking tea after the Opera, when this shouting was heard overhead "It's my cherub crying for his nurse," she said. She did not offer to move to go and see the child. "Don't agitate your feelings by going to look for him," said Lord Steyne sardonically. "Bah!" replied the other, with a sort of blush, "he'll cry himself to sleep," and they fell to talking about the Opera.

Rawdon had stolen off though, to look after his son and heir, and came back to the company when he found that honest Dolly was consoling the child. The Colonel's dressing-room was in those upper regions. He used to see the boy there in private. They had interviews together every morning when he shaved, Rawdon minor sitting on a box by his father's side, and watching the operation with never-ceasing pleasure. He and the sire were great friends. The father would bring him sweetmeats from the dessert, and hide them in a certain old epaulet box, where the child went to see them, and laughed with joy on discovering the treasure, laughed, but not too loud; for mamma was below asleep and must not be disturbed. She did not go to rest till very late, and seldom rose till after noon.

Rawdon bought the boy plenty of picture-books, and crammed his nursery with toys. Its walls were covered with pictures pasted up by the father's

own hand, and purchased by him for ready-money. When he was off duty with Mrs. Rawdon in the Park, he would sit up here, passing hours with the boy; who rode on his chest, who pulled his great mustachios as if they were driving-reins, and spent days with him in indefatigable gambols The room was a low room, and once, when the child was not five years old, his father, who was tossing him wildly up in his arms, hit the poor little chap's skull so violently against the ceiling that he almost dropped the child, so terrified was he at the disaster.

Rawdon minor had made up his face for a tremendous howl—the severity of the blow indeed authorised that indulgence; but just as he was going to begin, the father interposed.

"For God's sake, Rawdy, don't wake mamma," he cried. And the child, looking in a very hard and piteous way at his father, bit his lips, clenched his hands, and didn't cry a bit. Rawdon told that story at the clubs, at the mess, to everybody in town. "By Gad, sir," he explained to the public in general, "what a good plucked one that boy of mine is—what a trump he is! I half sent his head through the ceiling, by Gad, and he wouldn't cry for fear of disturbing his mother."

Sometimes—once or twice in a week—that lady visited the upper regions in which the child lived. She came like a vivified figure out of the *Magasin des Modes*—blandly smiling in the most beautiful new clothes and little gloves and boots. Wonderful scarfs, laces, and jewels glittered about her. She had always a new bonnet on: and flowers bloomed perpetually in it or else magnificent curling ostrich feathers, soft and snowy as camellias. She nodded twice or thrice patronisingly to the little boy, who looked up from his dinner or from the pictures of soldiers he was painting. When she left the room, an odour of rose, or some other magical fragrance, lingered about the nursery. She was an unearthly being in his eyes, superior to his father—to all the world: to be worshipped and admired at a distance. To drive with that lady in the carriage was an awful rite: he sate up in the back seat, and did not dare to speak: he gazed with all his eyes at the beautifully dressed princess opposite to him. Gentlemen on splendid prancing horses came up, and smiled and talked with her. How her eyes beamed upon all of them! Her hand used to quiver and wave gracefully as they passed. When he went out with her he had his new red dress on. His old brown holland was good enough when he stayed at home. Sometimes when she was away, and Dolly his maid was making his bed, he came into his mother's room. It was as the abode of a fairy to him—a mystic chamber of splendour and delights. There in the wardrobe hung those wonderful robes—pink and blue, and many tinted. There was the jewel-case, silver-clasped: and the wondrous bronze hand on the dressing-table, glistening all over with a hundred rings. There

was the cheval-glass, that miracle of art, in which he could just see his own wondering head, and the reflection of Dolly (queerly distorted, and as if up in the ceiling), plumping and patting the pillows of the bed Oh, thou poor lonely little benighted boy! Mother is the name of God in the lips and hearts of little children; and here was one who was worshipping a stone!

Now Rawdon Crawley, rascal as the Colonel was, had certain manly tendencies of affection in his heart, and could love a child and a woman still. For Rawdon minor he had a great secret tenderness then, which did not escape Rebecca, though she did not talk about it to her husband. It did not annoy her; she was too good-natured. It only increased her scorn for him. He felt somehow ashamed of this paternal softness, and hid it from his wife—only indulging in it when alone with the boy.

He used to take him out of mornings, when they would go to the stables together and to the Park. Little Lord Southdown, the best-natured of men, who would make you a present of the hat from his head, and whose main occupation in life was to buy nicknacks that he might give them away afterwards, bought the little chap a pony not much bigger than a large rat, the donor said, and on this little black Shetland pigmy young Rawdon's great father was pleased to mount the boy, and to walk by his side in the Park. It pleased him to see his old quarters, and his old fellow-guardsmen at Knightsbridge: he had begun to think of his bachelorhood with something like regret. The old troopers were glad to recognise their ancient officer, and dandle the little Colonel Colonel Crawley found dining at mess and with his brother-officers very pleasant. "Hang it, I ain't clever enough for her—I know it. She won't miss me," he used to say. and he was right, his wife did not miss him.

Rebecca was fond of her husband. She was always perfectly good-humoured and kind to him. She did not even show her scorn much for him; perhaps she liked him the better for being a fool. He was her upper servant and *maitre d'hotel.* He went on her errands: obeyed her orders without question drove in the carriage in the ring with her without repining; took her to the Opera-box; solaced himself at his club during the performance, and came punctually back to fetch her when due He would have liked her to be a little fonder of the boy: but even to that he reconciled himself. "Hang it, you know, she's so clever," he said, "and I'm not literary and that, you know." For, as we have said before, it requires no great wisdom to be able to win at cards and billiards, and Rawdon made no pretensions to any other sort of skill.

When the companion came, his domestic duties became very light. His wife encouraged him to dine abroad: she would let him off duty at the Opera. "Don't stay and stupefy yourself at home to-night, my dear," she

would say. "Some men are coming who will only bore you I would not ask them, but you know it's for your good, and now I have a sheep-dog, I need not be afraid to be alone."

"A sheep-dog—a companion! Becky Sharp with a companion! Isn't it good fun?" thought Mrs. Crawley to herself. The notion tickled hugely her sense of humour.

ROMANTIC PESSIMISM ON THE REASON



NO PHILOSOPHER pursues a single line of thought more consistently than Schopenhauer. The insatiable will which for him was the key to the nature of the world, he found in all things everywhere Its restless striving, as he saw it, had created all the appearances that made up the material universe, it tore down the mountains and rebuilt the continents, shattered planets and exploded into new suns. A flame of will burned in each human breast, warring with other chaotic fragments of will in the breasts of other men, contending endlessly in jungle, market place, forum, and field of battle.

But the very nature of the will, Schopenhauer points out, is self-defeating For will is not except by accident concerned with particular goals Its nature is to will. The will does not die down and cease to exist with the attainment of a desire; it merely passes on to new desires. The promise of felicity that the will holds out to itself, and to us whom it infects with its restlessness, can never be any more than a mirage The will lights the madness in the conqueror's brain, and endows the embraces of a girl with illusory ecstasy It torments and deceives, makes men dishonest and cruel,

creates hatred and misery. No rest is even possible for the human spirit, Schopenhauer concludes, unless the will could be brought to will its own annihilation.

There is, however, a haven from its madness. This is the realm of contemplation, which takes the forms of art and of pure thought. In music, in tragedy, in painting, in lyric poetry, men may realize vividly the entire panorama of the world and the innumerable patterns of human fate. Art is an escape from life, not in the sense that it falsifies reality, but that it perceives existence as it is, momentarily freed from the distorting will, unclouded by personal desire. And in the high, clear air of science, in the entire impersonal realm of reason, where the mind establishes inevitable and inviolable relationships, there is an empire of thought where men may rise superior to the dictates of the will.

But even here, like Satan intruding into Eden, the will makes its serpentine way. For our minds, Schopenhauer observes, are not easily animated by a selfless love of truth and wisdom. It is not the truth that we love, but our truth; we hate to yield even when others prove that we are wrong. The first word of disagreement can bring the proud will bristling and growling to the mouth of its cave; rare is the man who can scourge it back into the dark and allow another's thought to triumph over his own. So it is, Schopenhauer passes judgment, that the very processes of reflecting and debating are infected with dishonesty. Men will suppress facts, twist evidence, assert falsehoods, becloud the issues with irrelevances, ape reason with a thousand fallacies, resort to every wriggle of sophism rather than accept even a verbal defeat.

Such is the intellectual background that makes Schopenhauer's Art of Controversy *a consistent development of the philosophic attitude that produced his* World as Will and Idea. *But* The Art of Controversy *is more than a corollary or footnote to his general philosophy; it is a contemptuous exercise in cold irony. For Schopenhauer expresses no condemnation for the baseness in human nature he thus uncovers. He pretends, on the contrary, to abet it, and offers a handbook in the systematic distortion of truth, a tart compendium in the methods of making the worse appear the better cause. When he tells us that men are obstinate, vain, talkative, and innately dishonest, he does so with no bitterness of manner, but in a species of icy detachment that merely dissects what it takes for granted. The mendacious animal that is man will lie and cheat; here are some of the shabby tricks and mean shifts he resorts to.*

Schopenhauer

Beginning with a general anatomy of dialectic methods, Schopenhauer calmly points out which of them are intellectually valid and which are mere dishonest dodges. Follows a numbered list of thirty-eight sophistical stratagems, illustrated and analyzed with the same chill indifference For any reader not hardened into moral callousness, the effect is both revelatory and horrifying. For we recognize them all, we have heard them from pulpit and lecture platform, from the mouths of crooks, financiers, statesmen, and humanitarians, read them in editorial columns and in the learned tomes of economists and historians. Worse still, we redden to realize, there is hardly one of this humiliating list we have not stooped to ourselves. This mere enumeration of intellectual tricks, so dispassionately and mercilessly presented, forces us to see that our desire for victory is always tempting us into falsehood as spontaneously as our lungs breathe air.

It is a strange effect Schopenhauer produces on us. Partly we feel grim exhilaration in seeing the rogues unmasked, hypocrisy laid bare. Partly we feel an enhancement of knowledge and power: we are more strongly fortified than we were before against deception from without and self-deception from within Lastly, we burn with shame, stripped naked before our own consciences. All these are wholly salutary. And, of course, they are quite deliberately intended by Schopenhauer. Under cover of writing a handbook of chicanery, he has given us a practical aid to discover and combat it, under pretense of condoning falsehood he has inspired us to revere truth The Art of Controversy *is a weapon of truth militant and a panegyric to truth triumphant.*

THE ART OF CONTROVERSY

»»» Part of *The Art of Controversy* originally appeared in *Parerga and Paralipomena* in 1851; it was not published in entirety until after Schopenhauer's death in 1860 »»»

Schopenhauer Proves That the Aim of Argument Is Not Truth But Triumph

HUMAN nature is such that if A. and B. are engaged in thinking in common, and are communicating their opinions to one another on any subject, so long as it is not a mere fact of history, and A. perceives that B.'s thoughts on one and the same subject are not the same as his own, he does not begin by revising his own process of thinking, so as to discover any mistake which he may have made, but he assumes that the mistake has occurred in B.'s. In other words, man is naturally obstinate, and this quality in him is attended with certain results, treated of in the branch of knowledge which I should like to call Dialectic, but which, in order to avoid misunderstanding, I shall call Controversial or Eristical Dialectic. Accordingly, it is the branch of knowledge which treats of the obstinacy natural to man. Eristic is only a harsher name for the same thing. . . .

If the reader asks how this is, I reply that it is simply the natural baseness of human nature. If human nature were not base, but thoroughly honorable, we should in every debate have no other aim than the discovery of truth; we should not in the least care whether the truth proved to be in favor of the opinion which we had begun by expressing, or of the opinion of our adversary. That we should regard as a matter of no moment, or, at any rate, of very secondary consequence; but, as things are, it is the main concern. Our innate vanity, which is particularly sensitive in reference to our intellectual powers, will not suffer us to allow that our first position was wrong and our adversary's right. The way out of this difficulty would be simply to take the trouble always to form a correct judgment. For this a man would have to think before he spoke. But with most men, innate vanity is accompanied by loquacity and innate dishonesty. They speak before they think; and even though they may afterward perceive that they are wrong, and that what they assert is false, they want it to seem the contrary. The

interest in truth, which may be presumed to have been their only motive when they stated the proposition alleged to be true, now gives way to the interests of vanity: and so, for the sake of vanity, what is true must seem false, and what is false must seem true.

Dialectic, then, need have nothing to do with truth, as little as the fencing master considers who is in the right when a dispute leads to a duel. Thrust and parry is the whole business. Dialectic is the art of intellectual fencing, and it is only when we so regard it that we can erect it into a branch of knowledge. For if we take purely objective truth as our aim, we are reduced to mere Logic: if we take the maintenance of false propositions, it is mere Sophistic; and in either case it would have to be assumed that we were aware of what was true and what was false, and it is seldom that we have any clear idea of the truth beforehand. The true conception of Dialectic is, then, that which we have formed it is the art of intellectual fencing used for the purpose of getting the best of it in a dispute; and, although the name *Eristic* would be more suitable, it is more correct to call it Controversial Dialectic, *Dialectica eristica.*

Dialectic in this sense of the word has no other aim but to reduce to a regular system and collect and exhibit the arts which most men employ when they observe, in a dispute, that truth is not on their side, and still attempt to gain the day. Hence, it would be very inexpedient to pay any regard to objective truth or its advancement in the science of Dialectic; since this is not done in that original and natural Dialectic, innate in men, where they strive for nothing but victory. The science of Dialectic, in one sense of the word, is mainly concerned to tabulate and analyze dishonest stratagems, in order that in a real debate they may be at once recognized and defeated. It is for this very reason that Dialectic must admittedly take victory, and not objective truth, for its aim and purpose. . . .

THE BASIS OF ALL DIALECTIC

First of all, we must consider the essential nature of every dispute: what it is that really takes place in it.

Our opponent has stated a thesis, or we ourselves,—it is all one. There are two modes of refuting it, and two courses that we may pursue.

I. The modes are (1) *ad rem,* (2) *ad hominem* or *ex concessis.* That is to say: We may show either that the proposition is not in accordance with the nature of things, *i.e.,* with absolute, objective truth, or that it is inconsistent with other statements or admissions of our opponent, *i e.,* with truth as it appears to him. The latter mode of arguing a question produces only a

relative conviction, and makes no difference whatever to the objective truth of the matter.

II. The two courses that we may pursue are (1) the direct, and (2) the indirect refutation. The direct attacks the reason for the thesis, the indirect, its results. The direct refutation shows that the thesis is not true; the indirect, that it cannot be true.

The direct course admits of a twofold procedure. Either we may show that the reasons for the statement are false (*nego majorem, minorem*); or we may admit the reasons or premisses, but show that the statement does not follow from them (*nego consequentiam*); that is, we attack the conclusion or form of the syllogism.

The direct refutation makes use either of the *diversion* or of the *instance*.

(a) The *diversion*.—We accept our opponent's proposition as true, and then show what follows from it when we bring it into connection with some other proposition acknowledged to be true. We use the two propositions as the premisses of a syllogism giving a conclusion which is manifestly false, as contradicting either the nature of things, or other statements of our opponent himself; that is to say, the conclusion is false either *ad rem* or *ad hominem*. Consequently our opponent's proposition must have been false, for, while true premisses can give only a true conclusion, false premisses need not always give a false one.

(b) The *instance*, or the example to the contrary.—This consists of refuting the general proposition by direct reference to particular cases which are included in it in the way in which it is stated, but to which it does not apply, and by which it is therefore shown to be necessarily false.

STRATAGEMS

IV. If you want to draw a conclusion, you must not let it be foreseen, but you must get the premisses admitted one by one, unobserved, mingling them here and there in your talk, otherwise, your opponent will attempt all sorts of chicanery. Or, if it is doubtful whether your opponent will admit them, you must advance the premisses of these premisses, that is to say, you must draw up pro-syllogisms, and get the premisses of several of them admitted in no definite order. In this way you conceal your game until you have obtained all the admissions that are necessary, and so reach your goal by making a circuit.

XI. If you make an induction, and your opponent grants you the particular cases by which it is to be supported, you must refrain from asking him if he also admits the general truth which issues from the particulars, but intro-

duce it afterward as a settled and admitted fact; for in the meanwhile he will himself come to believe that he has admitted it, and the same impression will be received by the audience, because they will remember the many questions as to the particulars, and suppose that they must, of course, have attained their end.

XXX. This is the *argumentum ad verecundiam.* It consists of making an appeal to authority rather than reason, and in using such an authority as may suit the degree of knowledge possessed by your opponent.

Every man prefers belief to the exercise of judgment, says Seneca; and it is therefore an easy matter if you have an authority on your side which your opponent respects. The more limited his capacity and knowledge, the greater is the number of authorities who weigh with him. . . . There are very many authorities who find respect with the mob, and if you have none that is quite suitable, you can take one that appears to be so; you may quote what some said in another sense or in other circumstances Authorities which your opponent fails to understand are those of which he generally thinks the most. . . . You may also, should it be necessary, not only twist your authorities, but actually falsify them, or quote something which you have invented entirely yourself. As a rule, your opponent has no books at hand, and could not use them if he had.

When we come to look into the matter, so-called universal opinion is the opinion of two or three persons, and we should be persuaded of this if we could see the way in which it really arises.

We should find that it is two or three persons who, in the *first instance,* accepted it, or advanced and maintained it; and of whom people were so good as to believe that they had thoroughly tested it Then a few other persons, persuaded beforehand that the first were men of the requisite capacity, also accepted the opinion These, again, were trusted by many others, whose laziness suggested to them that it was better to believe at once, than to go through the troublesome task of testing the matter for themselves. Thus the number of these lazy and credulous adherents grew from day to day, for the opinion had no sooner obtained a fair measure of support than its further supporters attributed this to the fact that the opinion could only have obtained it by the cogency of its arguments. The remainder were then compelled to grant what was *universally granted,* so as not to pass for unruly persons who resisted opinions which every one accepted, or pert fellows who thought themselves cleverer than any one else.

When opinion reaches this stage, adhesion becomes a duty; and hence-

forward the few who are capable of forming a judgment hold their peace. Those who venture to speak are such as are entirely incapable of forming any opinions or any judgments of their own, being merely the echo of others' opinions; and, nevertheless, they defend them with all the greater zeal and intolerance. For what they hate in people who think differently is not so much the different opinions which they profess, as the presumption of wanting to form their own judgment, a presumption of which they themselves are never guilty, as they are very well aware. In short, there are very few who can think, but every man wants to have an opinion; and what remains but to take it ready-made from others, instead of forming opinions for himself?

Since this is what happens, where is the value of the opinion even of a hundred millions? It is no more established than a historical fact reported by a hundred chroniclers who can be proved to have plagiarized it from one another; the opinion in the end being traceable to a single individual. It is all what I say, what you say, and, finally, what he says; and the whole of it is nothing but a series of assertions.

XXXIII. "That's all very well in theory, but it won't do in practice." In this sophism you admit the premisses but deny the conclusion, in contradiction with a well-known rule of logic. The assertion is based upon an impossibility: what is right in theory *must* work in practice; and if it does not, there is a mistake in the theory; something has been overlooked and not allowed for; and, consequently, what is wrong in practice is wrong in theory too.

XXXVIII. A last trick is to become personal, insulting, rude, as soon as you perceive that your opponent has the upper hand, and that you are going to come off worst. It consists in passing from the subject of dispute, as from a lost game, to the disputant himself, and in some way attacking his person. It may be called the *argumentum ad personam,* to distinguish it from the *argumentum ad hominem,* which passes from the objective discussion of the subject pure and simple to the statements or admissions which your opponent has made in regard to it. But in becoming personal you leave the subject altogether, and turn your attack to his person, by remarks of an offensive and spiteful character. It is an appeal from the virtues of the intellect to the virtues of the body, or to mere animalism. This is a very popular trick, because every one is able to carry it into effect; and so it is of frequent application. Now the question is, What counter-trick avails for the other party? for if he has recourse to the same rule, there will be blows, or a duel, or an action for slander.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that it is sufficient not to become personal yourself. For by showing a man quite quietly that he is wrong, and that what he says and thinks is incorrect—a process which occurs in every dialectical victory—you embitter him more than if you used some rude or insulting expression. Why is this? Because, as Hobbes observes, all mental pleasure consists in being able to compare oneself with others to one's own advantage. Nothing is of greater moment to a man than the gratification of his vanity, and no wound is more painful than that which is inflicted on it. Hence such phrases as "Death before dishonor," and so on. The gratification of vanity arises mainly by comparison of oneself with others, in every respect, but chiefly in respect of one's intellectual powers, and so the most effective and the strongest gratification of it is to be found in controversy. Hence the embitterment of defeat, apart from any question of injustice, and hence recourse to that last weapon, that last trick, which you cannot evade by mere politeness.

LEWIS CARROLL TAKES THE CHILD AS TOUCHSTONE



GENERATIONS of children have tumbled down the Rabbit Hole into Wonderland with Alice and climbed through the mirror with her into the topsy-turvydom of Looking-Glass Country. They have delighted in the Mock Turtle, the Mad Hatter, the White Knight, and the rest of that glorious company with no suspicion that they were a comic-pantomime version of people we all know and their enchanting world a witty parody of the world we all live in. And there are some adults who prefer Alice in Wonderland to remain what Gulliver's Travels *has become, merely a delightful fantasy for children, having only the most glimmering references to serious reality. The brooks and hills of Alice's chessboard world must be as remote from this world as the Hills of Chankly Bore, the Cheshire Cat's grin as devoid of metaphysical implications as Aunt Jobiska's Runcible Cat with Crimson Whiskers; the March Hare must be defended from the horrid imputation of having any sense. Carroll's inspired creation, for these readers, must be kept only a kind of divine nonsense.*

Most of us, however, find it impossible to remain in this realm of pure poetry. We observe that "How doth the little crocodile" does strange

things to the moral of the little busy bee. We notice that "You are old, Father William" is a parody of Southey, and the White Knight's Song (whose name, *you remember, was* called *"Haddocks' Eyes") a parody of Wordsworth. We wonder if the reiterated chorus in the railway carriage, "His time is worth a thousand pounds a minute," "The smoke alone is worth a thousand pounds a puff," might not be an Oxford don's sardonic comment on the gospels of speed and gain. Perhaps we notice that the man clad in white paper looks oddly like Disraeli, and we may learn that Carroll gave instructions for him to be portrayed so The biography by his nephew Collingwood will even tell us that the Mad Hatter was a member of Carroll's mess at Christ Church. Gradually, while we still delight in Carroll's imaginative playfulness and his exquisite gaiety of tone, we come to see that he is irradiated by gleams of comic satire.*

Even so, it may not always be noticed how all *the details support an underlying design, and how systematic a satire is concealed in this tissue of fantasy. Highbrows who like to remind us that Carroll wrote treatises on determinants and calculus are fond of saying that his fantasy is the severely logical fantasy of the mathematician. This is true, but we ought to see what it means. Now, the outstanding characteristic of the mathematical imagination is that it assigns consistent meanings to all its symbols. "Let* $x =$ *a function of a," says the algebraist; and proceeds to manipulate his equations through whatever labyrinthine transformations may be needed to come out with the solution in his grasp. Carroll asks.*

What mean all these mysteries to me
Whose life is full of indices and surds?

$$x^2 + 7x + 53$$
$$= 11/3$$

What are the unknowns his fantastic symbols stand for?

We will have the clue to them if we realize that Alice in Wonderland *and* Through the Looking-Glass *form a satiric fantasy on education. They reveal the grown-up world seen through the eyes of a child Dreamlike and distorted with the child's innocent ignorance, they are filled with strange and unintelligible happenings because so much of what happens to a child is mysterious to it. Wonderland and Looking-Glass Country are simply the nursery, the schoolroom, and their surrounding countryside colored by wonder and inexperience. The strange creatures who have perpetual tea parties there or put you through confusing cross-examinations are on symbolic versions of the animals, fellow children, parents, teachers, an*

other adults who people the child's world. But more than all this, as Alice moves through the story we see the child learning in spite of all the muddle, stupidity, unfairness, and obstruction she has to deal with. By the end of the first book she has seen through the pompous grown-up façade "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" By the end of the second she has learned how to deal with them all—the loquacious Flowers, the eternal schoolboys Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the frowsily incompetent White Queen, and the bullying Red Queen If she were to encounter again any of the creatures of the first book, the curt and morose Caterpillar, or that prosy bore, the Duchess, she would know how to handle them too. Alice's adventures in education are complete.

It might be instructive to pursue her through some of them. Let us leave it to the psychoanalysts to decide just how far Carroll's unconscious was choosing his symbols for him when he pictures Alice's career as beginning with a fall through a deep hole into a confined space from which she has great difficulty in emerging. They will doubtless find much to say about the facts that when she is small enough to go through the doorway into the bright garden she lacks the key, and when she has the key she is too large to get out, that she grows until the hall seems about to crush her, and during this stage of her biological history finds herself mingling with extinct creatures like the Lory and the Dodo. ("Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.") Once in the outer world, she cannot remember how or when the hall vanished.

Poor little Alice doesn't make much of a success of things at first. She is surrounded by loud voices and bullying directions, contradicted, ordered about. "Hand it over!" "Run home this moment, and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan!" "Come back!" "Keep your temper!" "Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers." The Mad Hatter and the Duchess make rude personal remarks to her. "Your hair wants cutting" "You don't know much, and that's a fact." They ask hard questions and are never satisfied with her answers; when she gives up and asks for explanations, it either turns out that there aren't any or that they are completely unintelligible. "Why is a raven like a writing desk?" "So they had to fall a long way. So they got their tails fast in their mouths. So they couldn't get them out again." Let adults deny, if they can, the truth in this picture of the child's world.

Alice's early efforts to be friendly with the Mouse and the Birds are a dismal failure. The Caterpillar snubs her, the Frog Footman ignores her, the Cheshire Cat bewilders her. When she tries to apply what she has

been taught in the schoolroom, it doesn't work out right, her arithmetic gets snarled up, the geography doesn't fit the facts, and the verses come wrong She tries to assert herself with the Dormouse, the Mad Hatter, and the March Hare, and is shouted down by a chorus of "You might as well say that—" Nevertheless, she has learned to adjust herself to some of these challenges and to speak up for herself: she is able at last to fit the key to the door and walk into the garden.

Even then, she doesn't see through the stupidity and illiteracy of the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle, those two Old Grads with their tenuous shreds of academic nourishment and their continuing adolescent enthusiasm for games But, at the end of the book, she does see through the flat pasteboard fatuity of the trial scene. And in Looking-Glass Country, Humpty Dumpty starts her on the process of analyzing and understanding words. Finally, the White Knight, the one creature in the whole story who shows the little girl a touch of human affection, imparts the lesson of tenderness. Waving her handkerchief to him, as he had asked, and waiting till he is out of sight, "I hope it encouraged him," she says; "and now for the last brook, and to be a queen!"

Carroll has achieved the very great feat of inventing a wise and tender variation on the pastoral convention. The shepherds of the pastoral lyric, we saw in our glance at Gay's "Newgate Pastoral," The Beggar's Opera, *were used to throw an unfamiliar light on the values of a more sophisticated world; and Gay turns his shepherds into thieves and fences illumining the world of business and politics. With still another brilliant transformation, Carroll uses the naïve symbolic dream of a child to see through the shams of adult society He does more for those who have eyes to see, he shows how inadequate are the sympathy and understanding we give our own children. If Alice finds nearly all the creatures she encounters in her journey arbitrary and incomprehensible, it is no less significant that few of them make the effort to be kind or understanding with her. And near the end the episode of the Lion and the Unicorn, as Professor Harry Morgan Ayres points out, makes clear Carroll's point, "that the one 'fabulous monster' in all creation, the one thing* nobody *will accept as a fact and treat helpfully and affectionately, is a human child." Surely here is meaning enough, though disguised as a dream, jingling cap and bells. This is no mere mad, highhearted excursion in pure whimsy It turns out instead to hold a loving wisdom which all parents and teachers might ponder, and for which we should be forever grateful.*

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

*** *Alice* was originally published in 1866. The selection given here is from Chapters 9 and 10 ***

Two Old Grads Remember Their Schooldays

THEY very soon came upon a Gryphon, lying fast asleep in the sun. (If you don't know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture.) "Up, lazy thing!" said the Queen, "and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, and to hear his history. I must go back and see after some executions I have ordered," and she walked off, leaving Alice alone with the Gryphon. Alice did not quite like the look of the creature, but on the whole she thought it would be quite as safe to stay with it as to go after that savage Queen: so she waited.

The Gryphon sat up and rubbed its eyes: then it watched the Queen till she was out of sight: then it chuckled. "What fun!" said the Gryphon, half to itself, half to Alice.

"What *is* the fun?" said Alice.

"Why, *she*," said the Gryphon. "It's all her fancy, that: they never executes nobody, you know. Come on!"

"Everybody says 'come on!' here," thought Alice, as she went slowly after it: "I never was so ordered about before, in all my life, never!"

They had not gone far before they saw the Mock Turtle in the distance, sitting sad and lonely on a little ledge of rock, and, as they came nearer, Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break. She pitied him deeply. "What is his sorrow?" she asked the Gryphon. And the Gryphon answered, very nearly in the same words as before, "It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know. Come on!"

So they went up to the Mock Turtle, who looked at them with large eyes full of tears, but said nothing.

"This here young lady," said the Gryphon, "she wants for to know your history, she do."

"I'll tell it her," said the Mock Turtle in a deep, hollow tone. "Sit down, both of you, and don't speak a word till I've finished."

So they sat down, and nobody spoke for some minutes. Alice thought to herself "I don't see how he can *ever* finish, if he doesn't begin." But she waited patiently.

used to sing in the water, has quite escaped me." "Swans," suggests one of his audience "No, not swans. Very like swans, too. Thank you" "Oysters," propounds another. "No, nor oysters, But by no means unlike oysters; a very excellent idea, thank you, my dear sir, very much Wait! Sirens." Could anything be more ludicrous or more true to the man?

Only in the end, when Pecksniff is exposed and ruined, does Dickens' artistry desert him. Contrary to all probability then, for a moral gesture, he depicts Pecksniff as permanently undone. become a "drunken, squalid. begging-letter-writing man," haunting his erstwhile dupes and whining of their ingratitude. Molière had more tact and more truth Tartuffe, exposed, merely goes to jail. He will get out again, and turn up somewhere else. And Pecksniff, too, would turn up again So much oil in one body will always float to the surface.

It is this same determination to underline the moral that spoils the design of what, in its social insights, is one of Dickens' greatest books, Hard Times *Carlyle never made a more burning denunciation of the dismal science of classical economic theory or the heartlessness of "cash-nexus" as the only connection between man and man "The relations between master and man were all fact, between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchasable in the cheapest market and salable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen." "Fact, fact, fact!" says Thomas Gradgrind. "This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children Stick to facts, Sir." How pitiful the Gradgrinds and M'Choakumchilds find Cissy Jupe's inability to get the hang of facts!—"after eight weeks of induction into the elements of Political Economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three feet high, for returning to the question, 'What is the first principle of this science?' the absurd answer, 'To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me'"*

For Coketown read Fall River, Pittsburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, all the industrial cities of the world, with their brick factories and tenements "that would have been red if the smoke and ashes" had not made them an "unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage." And the ninety years that have passed since Hard Times *was written have done hardly more to date the cant with which industrial exploitation is defended than they have to brighten the drab and brutal thing Laboring men who protested wanted "to be set up in a coach and six, and to be fed on turtle*

soup and venison, with a gold spoon"; the laboring class "were a bad lot altogether, gentlemen," "restless," "never knew what they wanted," "lived upon the best, and bought fresh butter . . . rejected all but prime parts of meat; and yet were eternally dissatisfied and unmanageable." As for the labor unions· "the united masters" should not "allow of any such class combinations."

The wit and penetration of all this are as undeniable as the pity and just indignation behind it. Dickens sees the evils of industrialism with as clear a gaze as ever a man had. But his attitude is the attitude of the benevolent reformer hoping to accomplish everything by appeals to generosity and good will It seems to him understandable enough that workingmen in their desperation should turn to agitators and labor organizers, but he distrusts such leaders as fearfully as any member of the Liberty League. His antagonism to the labor leader Slackbridge is so intense that, not content with making him a ranting and dishonest demagogue, he must be portrayed as physically "ill-made" and "in mongrel dress," "his features crushed into an habitually sour expression." Not by their united action are workers to be raised, but (presumably) by some happy chance humiliating the vulgar braggart Bounderby, and by a change of heart converting Gradgrind to loving-kindness.

Such confusions are absurd, and they are constant in Dickens. He never seems sure whether evils are the outcome of social conditions that need to be changed or manifestations of individual cruelties and meannesses that ought to be punished. But businessmen and financiers are no more uniformly Scrooges, Merdles, and Bounderbys than they are Boffins, Jarndyces, and Cheerybles. Dickens' noblehearted anger should have been directed not so much at villainy as at ill-adjusted social machinery and bungled solutions of human problems. But he habitually confuses the two with all the heat of moral indignation, and habitually mistakes the individual for the institution.

These facts are the key to Dickens' strength and his weakness. Both in his burlesque moods and in his melodramatic anger he carries us with him when the core of feeling and representation is sound. When he fails it is not because of his exaggerations, but because the judgment and spirit behind them failed, when both of these are balanced and strong Dickens' technique is triumphant. That triumph is so much the outcome of a tremendous vitality that we should not, perhaps, regret its shortcomings. Without the weaknesses we might not have had the genius. Dickens was

so bursting with intense energy that everything erupted out of him as if out of a volcano—fire, smoke, white-hot metal, lava, and shooting stars—and rubble and mud as well. His very intellectual vivacity was not philosophic or scientific, but visceral, his brain was half blood stream. He had to observe the thronging life that he did observe, he had to shower a shining rain of ridicule and burlesque, he had to luxuriate in melodrama and pathos. He captures by furious or hilarious storm. That is his victory and his defect.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

*** *Martin Chuzzlewit* was first published in 1843-44. The selections given here are from Chapters 16 and 33 ***

Martin Encounters Freedom of the Press in New York

SOME trifling excitement prevailed upon the very brink and margin of the land of liberty; for an alderman had been elected the day before, and Party Feeling naturally running rather high on such an exciting occasion, the friends of the disappointed candidate had found it necessary to assert the great principles of Purity of Election and Freedom of Opinion by breaking a few legs and arms, and furthermore pursuing one obnoxious gentleman through the streets with the design of slitting his nose. These good-humoured little outbursts of the popular fancy were not in themselves sufficiently remarkable to create any great stir, after the lapse of a whole night, but they found fresh life and notoriety in the breath of the newsboys, who not only proclaimed them with shrill yells in all the highways and byways of the town, upon the wharves and among the shipping, but on the deck and down in the cabins of the steamboat; which, before she touched the shore, was boarded and overrun by a legion of those young citizens.

"Here's this morning's New York Sewer!" cried one. "Here's this morning's New York Stabber! Here's the New York Family Spy! Here's the New York Private Listener! Here's the New York Peeper! Here's the New York Plunderer! Here's the New York Keyhole Reporter! Here's the New York Rowdy Journal! Here's all the New York papers! Here's full particulars of the patriotic loco-foco movement yesterday, in which the whigs was so chawed up, and the last Alabama gouging case; and the interesting Arkansas dooel with Bowie knives; and all the Political, Commercial, and Fashionable News. Here they are! Here they are! Here's the papers, here's the papers!"

"Here's the Sewer!" cried another. "Here's the New York Sewer! Here's some of the twelfth thousand of to-day's Sewer, with the best accounts of the markets, and all the shipping news, and four whole columns of country correspondence, and a full account of the Ball at Mrs. White's last night, where all the beauty and fashion of New York was assembled, with the Sewer's own particulars of the private lives of all the ladies that was there!

Here's the Sewer! Here's some of the twelfth thousand of the New York Sewer! Here's the Sewer's exposure of the Wall Street Gang, and the Sewer's exposure of the Washington Gang, and the Sewer's exclusive account of a flagrant act of dishonesty committed by the Secretary of State when he was eight years old, now communicated, at a great expense, by his own nurse. Here's the Sewer! Here's the New York Sewer, in its twelfth thousand, with a whole column of New Yorkers to be shown up, and all their names printed! Here's the Sewer's article upon the Judge that tried him, day afore yesterday, for libel, and the Sewer's tribute to the independent Jury that didn't convict him, and the Sewer's account of what they might have expected if they had! Here's the Sewer, here's the Sewer! Here's the wide-awake Sewer; always on the look-out; the leading Journal of the United States, now in its twelfth thousand, and still a-printing off. Here's the New York Sewer!"

"It is in such enlightened means," said a voice almost in Martin's ear, "that the bubbling passions of my country find a vent."

Martin turned involuntarily, and saw, standing close at his side, a sallow gentleman, with sunken cheeks, black hair, small twinkling eyes, and a singular expression hovering about that region of his face, which was not a frown, nor a leer, and yet might have been mistaken at the first glance for either. Indeed it would have been difficult, on a much closer acquaintance, to describe it in any more satisfactory terms than as a mixed expression of vulgar cunning and conceit. This gentleman wore a rather broad-brimmed hat for the greater wisdom of his appearance, and had his arms folded for the greater impressiveness of his attitude. He was somewhat shabbily dressed in a blue surtout reaching nearly to his ankles, short loose trousers of the same colour, and a faded buff waistcoat, through which a discoloured shirt-frill struggled to force itself into notice, as asserting an equality of civil rights with the other portions of his dress, and maintaining a declaration of Independence on its own account. His feet, which were of unusually large proportions, were leisurely crossed before him as he half leaned against, half sat upon, the steamboat's bulwark; and his thick cane, shod with a mighty ferule at one end and armed with a great metal knob at the other, depended from a line-and-tassel on his wrist. Thus attired, and thus composed into an aspect of great profundity, the gentleman twitched up the right-hand corner of his mouth and his right eye simultaneously, and said, once more:

"It is in such enlightened means that the bubbling passions of my country find a vent."

As he looked at Martin, and nobody else was by, Martin inclined his head, and said:

"You allude to—?"

"To the Palladium of rational Liberty at home, sir, and the dread of Foreign oppression abroad," returned the gentleman, as he pointed with his cane to an uncommonly dirty newsboy with one eye. "To the Envy of the world, sir, and the leaders of Human Civilization. Let me ask you, sir," he added, bringing the ferule of his stick heavily upon the deck with the air of a man who must not be equivocated with, "how do you like my Country?"

"I am hardly prepared to answer that question yet," said Martin, "seeing that I have not been ashore."

"Well, I should expect you were not prepared, sir," said the gentleman "to behold such signs of National Prosperity as those?"

He pointed to the vessels lying at the wharves; and then gave a vague flourish with his stick, as if he would include the air and water, generally in this remark.

"Really," said Martin, "I don't know. Yes. I think I was."

The gentleman glanced at him with a knowing look, and said he liked his policy. It was natural, he said, and it pleased him as a philosopher to observe the prejudices of human nature.

"You have brought, I see, sir," he said, turning round towards Martin, and resting his chin on the top of his stick, "the usual amount of misery and poverty and ignorance and crime, to be located in the bosom of the great Republic. Well, sir! let 'em come on in ship-loads from the old country. When vessels are about to founder, the rats are said to leave 'em. There is considerable of truth, I find, in that remark."

"The old ship will keep afloat a year or two longer yet, perhaps," said Martin with a smile, partly occasioned by what the gentleman said, and partly by his manner of saying it, which was odd enough, for he emphasised all the small words and syllables in his discourse, and left the others to take care of themselves. as if he thought the larger parts of speech could be trusted alone, but the little ones required to be constantly looked after.

"Hope is said by the poet, sir," observed the gentleman, "to be the nurse of young Desire."

Martin signified that he had heard of the cardinal virtue in question serving occasionally in that domestic capacity.

"She will *not* rear her infant in the present instance, sir, you'll find," observed the gentleman.

"Time will show," said Martin.

The gentleman nodded his head gravely; and said, "What is your name, sir?"

Martin told him.

"How old are you, sir?"

Martin told him.

"What is your profession, sir?"

Martin told him that also.

"What is your destination, sir?" inquired the gentleman.

"Really," said Martin laughing, "I can't satisfy you in that particular, for I don't know it myself."

"Yes?" said the gentleman.

"No," said Martin.

The gentleman adjusted his cane under his left arm, and took a more deliberate and complete survey of Martin than he had yet had leisure to make. When he had completed his inspection, he put out his right hand, shook Martin's hand, and said:

"My name is Colonel Diver, sir. I am the Editor of the New York Rowdy Journal."

Martin received the communication with that degree of respect which an announcement so distinguished appeared to demand.

"The New York Rowdy Journal, sir," resumed the colonel, "is, as I expect you know, the organ of our aristocracy in this city."

"Oh! there *is* an aristocracy here, then?" said Martin. "Of what is it composed?"

"Of intelligence, sir," replied the colonel, "of intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequence in this republic. Dollars, sir."

Martin was very glad to hear this, feeling well assured that if intelligence and virtue led, as a matter of course, to the acquisition of dollars, he would speedily become a great capitalist. He was about to express the gratification such news afforded him, when he was interrupted by the captain of the ship, who came up at the moment to shake hands with the colonel, and who, seeing a well-dressed stranger on the deck (for Martin had thrown aside his cloak), shook hands with him also. This was an unspeakable relief to Martin, who, in spite of the acknowledged supremacy of intelligence and virtue in that happy country, would have been deeply mortified to appear before Colonel Diver in the poor character of a steerage passenger.

"Well, cap'en!" said the colonel.

"Well, colonel," cried the captain. "You're looking most uncommon bright, sir. I can hardly realise its being you, and that's a fact."

"A good passage, cap'en?" inquired the colonel, taking him aside.

"Well now! It was a pretty spanking run, sir," said, or rather sung, the captain, who was a genuine New Englander. "con-siderin' the weather."

"Yes?" said the colonel.

"Well! It was, sir," said the captain. "I've just now sent a boy up to your office with the passenger-list, colonel."

"You haven't got another boy to spare, p'raps, cap'en?" said the colonel, in a tone almost amounting to severity.

"I guess there air a dozen if you want 'em, colonel," said the captain

"One moderate big 'un could convey a dozen champagne, perhaps," observed the colonel, musing, "to my office. You said a spanking run, I think?"

"Well, so I did," was the reply.

"It's very nigh, you know," observed the colonel. "I'm glad it was a spanking run, cap'en. Don't mind about quarts if you're short of 'em. The boy can as well bring four-and-twenty pints, and travel twice as once.—A first-rate spanker, cap'en, was it? Yes?"

"A most e—tarnal spanker," said the skipper.

"I admire at your good fortun, cap'en. You might loan me a corkscrew at the same time, and half-a-dozen glasses if you liked. However bad the elements combine against my country's noble packet-ship, the Screw, sir," said the colonel, turning to Martin, and drawing a flourish on the surface of the deck with his cane, "her passage either way is almost certain to eventuate a spanker!"

The captain, who had the Sewer below at that moment, lunching expensively in one cabin, while the amiable Stabber was drinking himself into a state of blind madness in another, took a cordial leave of his friend the colonel, and hurried away to dispatch the champagne: well knowing (as it afterwards appeared) that if he failed to conciliate the editor of the Rowdy Journal, that potentate would denounce him and his ship in large capitals before he was a day older; and would probably assault the memory of his mother also, who had not been dead more than twenty years. The colonel being again left alone with Martin, checked him as he was moving away, and offered, in consideration of his being an Englishman, to show him the town and to introduce him, if such were his desire, to a genteel boarding-house. But before they entered on these proceedings (he said), he would beseech the honour of his company at the office of the Rowdy Journal, to partake of a bottle of champagne of his own importation.

All this was so extremely kind and hospitable, that Martin, though it was quite early in the morning, readily acquiesced. So, instructing Mark, who was deeply engaged with his friend and her three children, that when he had done assisting them, and had cleared the baggage, he was to wait for further orders at the Rowdy Journal Office, Martin accompanied his new friend on shore.

They made their way as they best could through the melancholy crowd

of emigrants upon the wharf, who, grouped about their beds and boxes, with the bare ground below them and the bare sky above, might have fallen from another planet, for anything they knew of the country; and walked for some short distance along a busy street, bounded on one side by the quays and shipping, and on the other by a long row of staring red-brick storehouses and offices, ornamented with more black boards and white letters, and more white boards and black letters, than Martin had ever seen before, in fifty times the space. Presently they turned up a narrow street, and presently into other narrow streets, until at last they stopped before a house whereon was painted in great characters, "ROWDY JOURNAL."

The colonel, who had walked the whole way with one hand in his breast, his head occasionally wagging from side to side, and his hat thrown back upon his ears, like a man who was oppressed to inconvenience by a sense of his own greatness, led the way up a dark and dirty flight of stairs into a room of similar character, all littered and bestrewn with odds and ends of newspapers and other crumpled fragments, both in proof and manuscript. Behind a mangy old writing-table in this apartment sat a figure with a stump of a pen in its mouth and a great pair of scissors in its right hand, clipping and slicing at a file of Rowdy Journals, and it was such a laughable figure that Martin had some difficulty in preserving his gravity, though conscious of the close observation of Colonel Diver.

The individual who sat clipping and slicing as aforesaid at the Rowdy Journals, was a small young gentleman of very juvenile appearance, and unwholesomely pale in the face; partly, perhaps, from intense thought, but partly, there is no doubt, from the excessive use of tobacco, which he was at that moment chewing vigorously. He wore his shirt-collar turned down over a black ribbon, and his lank hair, a fragile crop, was not only smoothed and parted back from his brow, that none of the Poetry of his aspect might be lost, but had, here and there, been grubbed up by the roots: which accounted for his loftiest developments being somewhat pimply. He had that order of nose on which the envy of mankind has bestowed the appellation "snub," and it was very much turned up at the end, as with a lofty scorn. Upon the upper lip of this young gentleman were tokens of a sandy down so very, very smooth and scant, that, though encouraged to the utmost, it looked more like a recent trace of gingerbread than the fair promise of a moustache; and this conjecture his apparently tender age went far to strengthen. He was intent upon his work. Every time he snapped the great pair of scissors, he made a corresponding motion with his jaws, which gave him a very terrible appearance.

Martin was not long in determining within himself that this must be Colonel Diver's son; the hope of the family, and future mainspring of the

Rowdy Journal. Indeed he had begun to say that he presumed this was the colonel's little boy, and that it was very pleasant to see him playing at Editor in all the guilelessness of childhood, when the colonel proudly interposed and said:

"My War Correspondent, sir. Mr. Jefferson Brick!"

Martin could not help starting at this unexpected announcement, and the consciousness of the irretrievable mistake he had nearly made.

Mr. Brick seemed pleased with the sensation he produced upon the stranger, and shook hands with him, with an air of patronage designed to reassure him, and to let him know that there was no occasion to be frightened, for he (Brick) wouldn't hurt him.

"You have heard of Jefferson Brick I see, sir," quoth the colonel, with a smile. "England has heard of Jefferson Brick. Europe has heard of Jefferson Brick. Let me see. When did you leave England, sir?"

"Five weeks ago," said Martin.

"Five weeks ago," repeated the colonel, thoughtfully; as he took his seat upon the table, and swung his legs. "Now let me ask you, sir, which of Mr. Brick's articles had become at that time the most obnoxious to the British Parliament and the Court of Saint James's?"

"Upon my word," said Martin, "I—"

"I have reason to know, sir," interrupted the colonel, "that the aristocratic circles of your country quail before the name of Jefferson Brick. I should like to be informed, sir, from your lips, which of his sentiments has struck the deadliest blow—"

"At the hundred heads of the Hydra of Corruption now grovelling in the dust beneath the lance of Reason, and spouting up to the universal arch above us, its sanguinary gore," said Mr. Brick, putting on a little blue cloth cap with a glazed front, and quoting his last article.

"The libation of freedom, Brick," hinted the colonel.

"Must sometimes be quaffed in blood, colonel," cried Brick. And when he said "blood," he gave the great pair of scissors a sharp snap, as if *they* said blood too, and were quite of his opinion.

This done, they both looked at Martin, pausing for a reply.

"Upon my life," said Martin, who had by this time quite recovered his usual coolness, "I can't give you any satisfactory information about it; for the truth is that I—"

"Stop!" cried the colonel, glancing sternly at his war correspondent, and giving his head one shake after every sentence. "That you never heard of Jefferson Brick, sir. That you never read Jefferson Brick, sir. That you never saw the Rowdy Journal, sir. That you never knew, sir, of its mighty influence upon the cabinets of Eu-rope. Yes?"

"That's what I was about to observe, certainly," said Martin.

"Keep cool, Jefferson," said the colonel gravely. "Don't bust! oh you Europeans! Arter that, let's have a glass of wine!" So saying, he got down from the table, and produced, from a basket outside the door, a bottle of champagne, and three glasses.

"Mr. Jefferson Brick, sir," said the colonel, filling Martin's glass and his own, and pushing the bottle to that gentleman, "will give us a sentiment."

"Well, sir!" cried the war correspondent, "since you have concluded to call upon me, I will respond. I will give you, sir, The Rowdy Journal and its brethren; the well of Truth, whose waters are black from being composed of printers' ink, but are quite clear enough for my country to behold the shadow of her Destiny reflected in."

"Hear, hear!" cried the colonel, with great complacency. "There are flowery components, sir, in the language of my friend?"

"Very much so, indeed," said Martin.

"There is to-day's Rowdy, sir," observed the colonel, handing him a paper. "You'll find Jefferson Brick at his usual post in the van of human civilisation and moral purity."

The colonel was by this time seated on the table again. Mr. Brick also took up a position on that same piece of furniture; and they fell to drinking pretty hard. They often looked at Martin as he read the paper, and then at each other. When he laid it down, which was not until they had finished a second bottle, the colonel asked him what he thought of it.

"Why, it's horribly personal," said Martin.

The colonel seemed much flattered by this remark; and said he hoped it was.

"We are independent here, sir," said Mr. Jefferson Brick. "We do as we like."

"If I may judge from this specimen," returned Martin, "there must be a few thousands here, rather the reverse of independent, who do as they don't like."

"Well! They yield to the popular mind of the Popular Instructor, sir," said the colonel. "They rile up, sometimes; but in general we have a hold upon our citizens, both in public and in private life, which is as much one of the ennobling institutions of our happy country as—"

"As nigger slavery itself," suggested Mr. Brick.

"En—tirely so," remarked the colonel.

"Pray," said Martin, after some hesitation, "may I venture to ask, with reference to a case I observe in this paper of yours, whether the Popular Instructor often deals in—I am at a loss to express it without giving you offence—in forgery? In forged letters, for instance," he pursued, for the

colonel was perfectly calm and quite at his ease, "solemnly purporting to have been written at recent periods by living men?"

"Well, sir!" replied the colonel. "It does, now and then."

"And the popular instructed; what do they do?" asked Martin.

"Buy 'em." said the colonel.

Mr. Jefferson Brick expectorated and laughed; the former copiously, the latter approvingly.

"Buy 'em by hundreds of thousands," resumed the colonel. "We are a smart people here, and can appreciate smartness."

"Is smartness American for forgery?" asked Martin.

"Well!" said the colonel, "I expect it's American for a good many things that you call by other names. But you can't help yourself in Europe. We can."

"And do, sometimes," thought Martin. "You help yourselves with very little ceremony, too!"

"At all events, whatever name we choose to employ," said the colonel, stooping down to roll the third empty bottle into a corner after the other two, "I suppose the art of forgery was not invented here, sir?"

"I suppose not," replied Martin.

"Nor any other kind of smartness, I reckon?"

"Invented! No, I presume not."

"Well!" said the colonel; "then we got it all from the old country, and the old country's to blame for it, and not the new 'un. There's an end of *that*. Now, if Mr. Jefferson Brick and you will be so good as to clear, I'll come out last, and lock the door."

Rightly interpreting this as the signal for their departure, Martin walked down-stairs after the war correspondent, who preceded him with great majesty. The colonel following, they left the Rowdy Journal Office and walked forth into the streets: Martin feeling doubtful whether he ought to kick the colonel for having presumed to speak to him, or whether it came within the bounds of possibility that he and his establishment could be among the boasted usages of that regenerated land.

It was clear that Colonel Diver, in the security of his strong position, and in his perfect understanding of the public sentiment, cared very little what Martin or anybody else thought about him. His high-spiced wares were made to sell, and they sold, and his thousands of readers could as rationally charge their delight in filth upon him, as a glutton can shift upon his cook the responsibility of his beastly excess. Nothing would have delighted the colonel more than to be told that no such man as he could walk in high success the streets of any other country in the world: for that would only have been a logical assurance to him of the correct adaptation of his labours

to the prevailing taste, and of his being strictly and peculiarly a national feature of America.

They walked a mile or more along a handsome street which the colonel said was called Broadway, and which Mr. Jefferson Brick said "whipped the universe." Turning, at length, into one of the numerous streets which branched from this main thoroughfare, they stopped before a rather mean-looking house with jalousie blinds to every window, a flight of steps before the green street-door; a shining white ornament on the rails on either side like a petrified pine apple, polished; a little oblong plate of the same material over the knocker, whereon the name of "Pawkins" was engraved, and four accidental pigs looking down the area.

The colonel knocked at this house with the air of a man who lived there, and an Irish girl popped her head out of one of the top windows to see who it was. Pending her journey down-stairs, the pigs were joined by two or three friends from the next street, in company with whom they lay down sociably in the gutter.

"Is the major in-doors?" inquired the colonel, as he entered.

"Is it the master, sir?" returned the girl, with a hesitation which seemed to imply that they were rather flush of majors in that establishment.

"The master!" said Colonel Diver, stopping short and looking round at his war correspondent

"Oh! The depressing institutions of that British empire, colonel!" said Jefferson Brick. "Master!"

"What's the matter with the word?" asked Martin.

"I should hope it was never heard in our country, sir: that's all," said Jefferson Brick: "except when it is used by some degraded Help, as new to the blessings of our form of government, as this Help is. There are no masters here."

"All 'owners,' are they?" said Martin

Mr. Jefferson Brick followed in the Rowdy Journal's footsteps without returning any answer. Martin took the same course, thinking as he went, that perhaps the free and independent citizens, who in their moral elevation, owned the colonel for their master, might render better homage to the goddess, Liberty, in nightly dreams upon the oven of a Russian Serf.

Martin Encounters Freedom of Speech in Eden

[*Arriving in the miserable and swampy settlement of Eden, Martin promptly falls ill with malaria, and is nursed by his companion, Mark Tapley.*]

"There's one good thing in this place, sir," said Mr. Tapley, scrubbing away at the linen, "as disposes me to be jolly; and that is, that it's a reg'lar little United States in itself. There's two or three American settlers left, and they coolly comes over one, even here, sir, as if it was the wholesomest and loveliest spot in the world. But they're like the cock that went and hid himself to save his life, and was found out by the noise he made. They can't help crowing. They was born to do it, and do it they must, whatever comes of it."

Glancing from his work out at the door as he said these words, Mark's eyes encountered a lean person in a blue frock and a straw hat, with a short black pipe in his mouth, and a great hickory stick, studded all over with knots, in his hand, who smoking and chewing as he came along, and spitting frequently, recorded his progress by a train of decomposed tobacco on the ground.

"Here's one on 'em," cried Mark, "Hannibal Chollop."

"Don't let him in," said Martin, feebly.

"He won't want any letting in," replied Mark. "He'll come in, sir." Which turned out to be quite true, for he did. His face was almost as hard and knobby as his stick; and so were his hands. His head was like an old black hearth-broom. He sat down on the chest with his hat on: and crossing his legs and looking up at Mark, said without removing his pipe:

"Well, Mr. Co.! and how do you git along, sir?"

It may be necessary to observe that Mr. Tapley had gravely introduced himself to all strangers, by that name.

"Pretty well, sir; pretty well," said Mark.

"If this ain't Mr. Chuzzlewit, ain't it!" exclaimed the visitor. "How do you git along, sir?"

Martin shook his head, and drew the blanket over it involuntarily, for he felt that Hannibal was going to spit, and his eye, as the song says, was upon him.

"You need not regard me, sir," observed Mr. Chollop, complacently. "I am fever-proof, and likewise agur."

"Mine was a more selfish motive," said Martin, looking out again. "I was afraid you were going to—"

"I can calc'late my distance, sir," returned Mr. Chollop, "to an inch." With a proof of which happy faculty he immediately favoured him.

"I re-quire, sir," said Hannibal, "two foot clear in a circ'lar di-rection, and can engage my-self toe keep within it. I *have* gone ten foot, in a circ'lar direction, but that was for a wager."

"I hope you won it, sir," said Mark.

"Well, sir, I realised the stakes," said Chollop "Yes, sir."

He was silent for a time, during which he was actively engaged in the formation of a magic circle round the chest on which he sat. When it was completed, he began to talk again.

"How do you like our country, sir?" he inquired, looking at Martin.

"Not at all," was the invalid's reply.

Chollop continued to smoke without the least appearance of emotion, until he felt disposed to speak again. That time at length arriving, he took his pipe from his mouth, and said.

"I am not surprised to hear you say so. It re-quires An elevation, and A preparation of the intellect. The mind of man must be prepared for Freedom, Mr. Co."

He addressed himself to Mark: because he saw that Martin, who wished him to go, being already half-mad with feverish irritation, which the droning voice of this new horror rendered almost insupportable, had closed his eyes, and turned on his uneasy bed.

"A little bodily preparation wouldn't be amiss, either, would it, sir," said Mark, "in the case of a blessed old swamp like this?"

"Do you con-sider this a swamp, sir?" inquired Chollop gravely.

"Why yes, sir," returned Mark. "I haven't a doubt about it myself."

"The sentiment is quite Europian," said the major, "and does not surprise me. what would your English millions say to such a swamp in England, sir?"

"They'd say it was an uncommon nasty one, I should think," said Mark; "and that they would rather be inoculated for fever in some other way."

"Europian!" remarked Chollop, with sardonic pity. "Quite Europian!"

And there he sat. Silent and cool, as if the house were his, smoking away like a factory chimney.

Mr. Chollop was, of course, one of the most remarkable men in the country; but he really was a notorious person besides. He was usually described by his friends, in the South and West, as "a splendid sample of our na-tive raw material, sir," and was much esteemed for his devotion to rational Liberty; for the better propagation whereof he usually carried a brace of revolving pistols in his coat pocket, with seven barrels a-piece He also carried, amongst other trinkets, a sword-stick, which he called his "Tickler";

and a great knife, which (for he was a man of a pleasant turn of humour) he called "Ripper," in allusion to its usefulness as a means of ventilating the stomach of any adversary in a close contest. He had used these weapons with distinguished effect in several instances, all duly chronicled in the newspapers, and was greatly beloved for the gallant manner in which he had "jobbed out" the eye of one gentleman, as he was in the act of knocking at his own street-door.

Mr. Chollop was a man of a roving disposition; and, in any less advanced community, might have been mistaken for a violent vagabond. But his fine qualities being perfectly understood and appreciated in those regions where his lot was cast, and where he had many kindred spirits to consort with, he may be regarded as having been born under a fortunate star, which is not always the case with a man so much before the age in which he lives. Preferring, with a view to the gratification of his tickling and ripping fancies, to dwell upon the outskirts of society, and in the more remote towns and cities, he was in the habit of emigrating from place to place, and establishing in each some business—usually a newspaper—which he presently sold for the most part closing the bargain by challenging, stabbing, pistoling, or gouging the new editor, before he had quite taken possession of the property.

He had come to Eden on a speculation of this kind, but had abandoned it, and was about to leave. He always introduced himself to strangers as a worshipper of Freedom; was the consistent advocate of Lynch law, and slavery; and invariably recommended, both in print and speech, the "tarring and feathering" of any unpopular person who differed from himself. He called this "planting the standard of civilisation in the wilder gardens of My country."

There is little doubt that Chollop would have planted this standard in Eden at Mark's expense, in return for his plainness of speech (for the genuine Freedom is dumb, save when she vaunts herself), but for the utter desolation and decay prevailing in the settlement, and his own approaching departure from it. As it was, he contented himself with showing Mark one of the revolving-pistols, and asking him what he thought of that weapon.

"It ain't long since I shot a man down with that, sir, in the State of Illinoy," observed Chollop.

"Did you, indeed!" said Mark, without the smallest agitation. "Very free of you. And very independent!"

"I shot him down, sir," pursued Chollop, "for asserting in the Spartan Portico, a tri-weekly journal, that the ancient Athenians went a-head of the present Locofoco Ticket."

"And what's that?" asked Mark.

"Once," said the Mock Turtle at last, with a deep sigh, "I was a real Turtle."

These words were followed by a very long silence, broken only by an occasional exclamation of "Hjckrrh!" from the Gryphon, and the constant heavy sobbing of the Mock Turtle. Alice was very nearly getting up and saying, "Thank you, Sir, for your interesting story," but she could not help thinking there *must* be more to come, so she sat still and said nothing

"When we were little," the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, "we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle—we used to call him Tortoise—"



"Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?" Alice asked

"We called him Tortoise because he taught us," said the Mock Turtle angrily. "Really you are very dull!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question," added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. At last the Gryphon said to the Mock Turtle "Drive on, old fellow! Don't be all day about it!" and he went on in these words:—

"Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn't believe it—"

"I never said I didn't!" interrupted Alice.

"You did," said the Mock Turtle.

"Hold your tongue!" added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again. The Mock Turtle went on

"We had the best of educations—in fact, we went to school every day—"

"*I've* been to a day-school, too," said Alice. "You needn't be so proud as all that."

"With extras?" asked the Mock Turtle, a little anxiously.

"Yes," said Alice "we learned French and music."

"And washing?" said the Mock Turtle.

"Certainly not!" said Alice indignantly.

"Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school," said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief. "Now, at *ours*, they had, at the end of the bill, 'French, music, *and washing*—extra.' "

"You couldn't have wanted it much," said Alice; "living at the bottom of the sea."

"I couldn't afford to learn it," said the Mock Turtle with a sigh. "I only took the regular course."

"What was that?" inquired Alice.

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied, "and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

"I never heard of 'Uglification,' " Alice ventured to say. "What is it?"

The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. "Never heard of uglifying!" it exclaimed. "You know what to beautify is, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Alice doubtfully: "it means—to—make—anything—prettier."

"Well, then," the Gryphon went on, "if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton."

Alice did not feel encouraged to ask any more questions about it: so she turned to the Mock Turtle, and said "What else had you to learn?"

"Well, there was Mystery," the Mock Turtle replied, counting off the subjects on his flappers,—"Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography: then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a week: *he* taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils."

"What was *that* like?" said Alice.

"Well, I ca'n't show it to you, myself," the Mock Turtle said. "I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learnt it."

"Hadn't time," said the Gryphon: "I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, *he* was."

"I never went to him," the Mock Turtle said with a sigh. "He taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say."

"So he did, so he did," said the Gryphon, sighing in his turn, and both creatures hid their faces in their paws.

"And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

"Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle: "nine the next, and so on."

"What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice.

"That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked· "because they lessen from day to day."

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. "Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?"

"Of course it was," said the Mock Turtle.

"And how did you manage on the twelfth?" Alice went on eagerly.

"That's enough about lessons," the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone. "Tell her something about the games now."

The Mock Turtle sighed deeply, and drew the back of one flapper across his eyes. He looked at Alice and tried to speak, but, for a minute or two, sobs choked his voice. "Same as if he had a bone in his throat," said the Gryphon; and it set to work shaking him and punching him in the back. At last the Mock Turtle recovered his voice, and, with tears running down his cheeks, he went on again:–

"You may not have lived much under the sea–" ("I haven't," said Alice) –"and perhaps you were never even introduced to a lobster–" (Alice began to say "I once tasted—" but checked herself hastily, and said "No, never") "—so you can have no idea what a delightful thing a Lobster-Quadrille is!"

"No, indeed," said Alice. "What sort of a dance is it?"

"Why," said the Gryphon, "you first form into a line along the seashore—"

"Two lines!" cried the Mock Turtle. "Seals, turtles, salmon, and so on then, when you've cleared all the jelly-fish out of the way—"

"*That* generally takes some time," interrupted the Gryphon.

"–you advance twice—"

"Each with a lobster as a partner!" cried the Gryphon.

"Of course," the Mock Turtle said: "advance twice, set to partners—"

"–change lobsters, and retire in same order," continued the Gryphon

"Then, you know," the Mock Turtle went on, "you throw the—"

"The lobsters!" shouted the Gryphon, with a bound into the air.

"–as far out to sea as you can—"

"Swim after them!" screamed the Gryphon.

"Turn a somersault in the sea!" cried the Mock Turtle, capering wildly about.

"Change lobsters again!" yelled the Gryphon at the top of its voice.

"Back to land again, and–that's all the first figure," said the Mock

Turtle, suddenly dropping his voice; and the two creatures, who had been jumping about like mad things all this time, sat down again very sadly and quietly, and looked at Alice.

"It must be a very pretty dance," said Alice timidly.

"Would you like to see a little of it?" said the Mock Turtle.

"Very much indeed," said Alice.

"Come, let's try the first figure!" said the Mock Turtle to the Gryphon. "We can do it without lobsters, you know. Which shall sing?"

"Oh, *you* sing," said the Gryphon. "I've forgotten the words."

So they began solemnly dancing round and round Alice, every now and then treading on her toes when they passed too close, and waving their fore-paws to mark the time, while the Mock Turtle sang this, very slowly and sadly:—

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle—will you come and join the dance?
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance—
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
 Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.
 Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied.
"The further off from England the nearer is to France.
There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?"

"Thank you, it's a very interesting dance to watch," said Alice, feeling very glad that it was over at last: "and I do so like that curious song about the whiting!"

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

◂◂◂ *Through the Looking-Glass* was originally published in 1872. The selection given here is from Chapter 6 ▸▸▸

Humpty Dumpty Explains How to Rule Words

HUMPTY DUMPTY was sitting, with his legs crossed like a Turk, on the top of a high wall—such a narrow one that Alice quite wondered how he could keep his balance—and, as his eyes were steadily fixed in the opposite direction, and he didn't take the least notice of her, she thought he must be a stuffed figure, after all.

"And how exactly like an egg he is!" she said aloud, standing with her hands ready to catch him, for she was every moment expecting him to fall.

"It's *very* provoking," Humpty Dumpty said after a long silence, looking away from Alice as he spoke, "to be called an egg—*very!*"

"I said you *looked* like an egg, Sir," Alice gently explained. "And some eggs are very pretty, you know," she added, hoping to turn her remark into a sort of compliment.

"Some people," said Humpty Dumpty, looking away from her as usual, "have no more sense than a baby!"

"Why do you sit out here all alone?" said Alice, not wishing to begin an argument.

"Why, because there's nobody with me!" cried Humpty Dumpty. "Did you think I didn't know the answer to *that*? Ask another."

"Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground?" Alice went on, not with any idea of making another riddle, but simply in her good-natured anxiety for the queer creature. "That wall is so *very* narrow!"

"What tremendously easy riddles you ask!" Humpty Dumpty growled out. "Of course I don't think so! Why, if ever I *did* fall off—which there's no chance of—but *if* I did—" Here he pursed up his lips, and looked so solemn and grand that Alice could hardly help laughing. "*If* I *did* fall," he went on, "*The King has promised me*—ah, you may turn pale, if you like! You didn't think I was going to say that, did you? *The King has promised me—with his very own mouth*—to—to—"

"To send all his horses and all his men," Alice interrupted, rather unwisely.

"Now I declare that's too bad!" Humpty Dumpty cried, breaking into a sudden passion. "You've been listening at doors—and behind trees—and down chimneys—or you couldn't have known it!"

"I haven't, indeed!" Alice said very gently. "It's in a book."

"Ah, well! They may write such things in a *book*," Humpty Dumpty said in a calmer tone. "That's what you call a History of England, that is. Now, take a good look at me! I'm one that has spoken to a King, *I* am: mayhap you'll never see such another: and, to show you I'm not proud, you may shake hands with me!" And he grinned almost from ear to ear, as he



leant forwards (and as nearly as possible fell off the wall in doing so) and offered Alice his hand. She watched him a little anxiously as she took it. "If he smiled much more the ends of his mouth might meet behind," she thought. "And then I don't know *what* would happen to his head! I'm afraid it would come off!"

"Yes, all his horses and all his men," Humpty Dumpty went on. "They'd pick me up again in a minute, *they* would! However, this conversation is going on a little too fast: let's go back to the last remark but one."

"I'm afraid I ca'n't quite remember it," Alice said, very politely.

"In that case we start afresh," said Humpty Dumpty, "and it's my turn to choose a subject—" ("He talks about it just as if it was a game!" thought Alice.) "So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?"

Alice made a short calculation, and said "Seven years and six months."

"Wrong!" Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly. "You never said a word like it!"

"I thought you meant 'How old *are* you?' " Alice explained.

"If I'd meant that, I'd have said it," said Humpty Dumpty.

Alice didn't want to begin another argument, so she said nothing.

"Seven years and six months!" Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. "An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said 'Leave off at seven'—but it's too late now."

"I never ask advice about growing," Alice said indignantly.

"Too proud?" the other enquired.

Alice felt even more indignant at this suggestion. "I mean," she said, "that one ca'n't help growing older."

"*One* ca'n't, perhaps," said Humpty Dumpty; "but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven."

"What a beautiful belt you've got on!" Alice suddenly remarked. (They had had quite enough of the subject of age, she thought: and, if they really were to take turns in choosing subjects, it was *her* turn now.) "At least," she corrected herself on second thoughts, "a beautiful cravat. I should have said—no, a belt, I mean—I beg your pardon!" she added in dismay, for Humpty Dumpty looked thoroughly offended, and she began to wish she hadn't chosen that subject. "If only I knew," she thought to herself, "which was neck and which was waist!"

Evidently Humpty Dumpty was very angry, though he said nothing for a minute or two. When he *did* speak again, it was in a deep growl.

"It is a—*most*—*provoking*—thing," he said at last, "when a person doesn't know a cravat from a belt!"

"I know it's very ignorant of me," Alice said, in so humble a tone that Humpty Dumpty relented.

"It's a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. It's a present from the White King and Queen. There now!"

"Is it really?" said Alice, quite pleased to find that she *had* chosen a good subject after all.

"They gave it me," Humpty Dumpty continued thoughtfully as he crossed one knee over the other and clasped his hands round it, "they gave it me—for an un-birthday present."

"I beg your pardon?" Alice said with a puzzled air.

"I'm not offended," said Humpty Dumpty.

"I mean, what *is* an un-birthday present?"

"A present given when it isn't your birthday, of course."

Alice considered a little. "I like birthday presents best," she said at last.

"You don't know what you're talking about!" cried Humpty Dumpty "How many days are there in a year?"

"Three hundred and sixty-five," said Alice.

"And how many birthdays have you?"

"One."

"And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five what remains?"

"Three hundred and sixty-four, of course."

Humpty Dumpty looked doubtful. "I'd rather see that done on paper," he said.

Alice couldn't help smiling as she took out her memorandum-book, and worked the sum for him:

$$\begin{array}{r} 365 \\ -\quad 1 \\ \hline 364 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Humpty Dumpty took the book and looked at it carefully. "That seems to be done right——" he began.

"You're holding it upside down!" Alice interrupted.

"To be sure I was!" Humpty Dumpty said gaily as she turned it round for him. "I thought it looked a little queer. As I was saying, that *seems* to be done right—though I haven't time to look it over thoroughly just now—and that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents——"

"Certainly," said Alice.

"And only *one* for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything; so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. "They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs: they're the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That's what *I* say!"

"Would you tell me please," said Alice, "what that means?"

"Now you talk like a reasonable child," said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. "I meant by 'impenetrability' that we've had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean

to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life."

"That's a great deal to make one word mean," Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

"When I make a word do a lot of work like that," said Humpty Dumpty, "I always pay it extra."

"Oh!" said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark.

"Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night," Humpty Dumpty went on, wagging his head gravely from side to side, "for to get their wages, you know."

(Alice didn't venture to ask what he paid them with, and so you see I ca'n't tell *you*.)

"You seem very clever at explaining words, Sir," said Alice. "Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called 'Jabberwocky'?"

"Let's hear it," said Humpty Dumpty. "I can explain all the poems that ever were invented—and a good many that haven't been invented just yet."

This sounded very hopeful, so Alice repeated the first verse:—



" 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe."

"That's enough to begin with," Humpty Dumpty interrupted: "there are plenty of hard words there. '*Brillig*' *means four o'clock in the afternoon*—the time when you begin *broiling* things for dinner."

"That'll do very well," said Alice: "and '*slithy*'?"

"Well, '*slithy*' means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word."

"I see it now," Alice remarked thoughtfully: "and what are '*toves*'?"

"Well, '*toves*' are something like badgers—they're something like lizards—and they're something like corkscrews."

"They must be very curious-looking creatures."

"They are that," said Humpty Dumpty: "also they make their nests under sun-dials—also they live on cheese."

"And what's to '*gyre*' and to '*gimble*'?"

"To '*gyre*' is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To '*gimble*' is to make holes like a gimlet."

"And '*the wabe*' is the grass-plot round a sun-dial, I suppose?" said Alice, surprised at her own ingenuity.

"Of course it is. It's called '*wabe*' you know, because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it—"

"And a long way beyond it on each side," Alice added.

"Exactly so. Well then, '*mimsy*' is 'flimsy and miserable' (there's another portmanteau for you). And a '*borogove*' is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round—something like a live mop."

"And then '*mome raths*'?" said Alice. "I'm afraid I'm giving you a great deal of trouble."

"Well, a '*rath*' is a sort of green pig: but '*mome*' I'm not certain about. I think it's short for 'from home'—meaning that they'd lost their way, you know."

"And what does '*outgrabe*' mean?"

"Well, '*outgribing*' is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle: however, you'll hear it done, maybe—down in the wood yonder—and, when you've once heard it, you'll be *quite* content. Who's been repeating all that hard stuff to you?"

"I read it in a book," said Alice.

THE FATHERS AND THE CANTANKEROUS SAGE



NO READER *of Butler's autobiographic novel* The Way of All Flesh *should find it hard to understand the roots of his rebellion against the dogmas of organized society. The domineering cruelty of the Reverend Theobald Pontifex, the sly maternal possessiveness of Christina, demanding love and trust and then betraying them, these became for Butler the types of what the world would try to do to every one of its individual sons. The Fathers were everywhere, the Old Men of the Tribe, keeping the young in subjection, crushing their individuality, denying them the rights of adulthood, insisting upon an absolute slavish conformity, smothering their spiritual freedom. The Fathers took a thousand forms: vested interests, conventional shibboleths, religious authority, scientific orthodoxies Their demands would enclose life itself within rigid prison walls. What else was there to do but rebel?*

What began in Butler, then, as rebellion against the Reverend Thomas Butler turned into rebellion against the father-symbol in the world. He would be the bad boy of humanity, thumbing his nose at all the ecclesiastical, literary, artistic, and scientific bigwigs, and heaving bricks into the

middle of them. He carried it to the point of being obstreperous and pernickety. If the world glorified Beethoven, he would enthrone Handel; if he had to admire Homer, he would make his own translation, and insist that the Odyssey was really written by a woman. He would memorize every one of the hundred and fifty-four sonnets of Shakespeare and rearrange them to prove that they told a different story than the literary scholars said they did. Like David advancing with his slingshot against Goliath, he would fight singlehanded against Darwin and the embattled biologists: their observations, doubtless, were correct, but their interpretations were wrong. The trouble with the scientists was that they were such bad logicians!

Butler is more, however, than a mere enfant terrible, and his iconoclasm has profounder bases than contrariness. During the long voyage out to New Zealand in 1859 he had read The Origin of Species. He welcomed it at first with exhilaration; he saw well enough what a blow it would strike at the orthodoxies of religion. On deeper second thought, though, he set his mind against, not the doctrine of evolution, but Darwin's version of it. Butler had rebelled against rigid authoritarianism, social convention, ecclesiastical dogma. But how modest were the dogmas of the Church, telling you that you must believe and obey, in comparison with this scientific dogma telling you that whether you believed or not you could not but obey! The inflexible workings of accidental variation, struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest made a mockery of freedom and a machine of every living creature. Henceforth Butler saw in mechanism the ultimate face of his foe. Vitalism, freedom of the will, intelligence growing and clarifying its own aims, became the banners under which he fought.

Erewhon, at the beginning of Butler's career in 1872, ranges over almost every field in which he was to battle: it is the plan of a life-long campaign. In form it belongs among the imaginary voyages, but his method is argument rising on wings of analogy. Butler's weapons are those of the logic in which scientists were so weak. Ideas and institutions we had never thought of comparing are analyzed in the same light, and the most startling consequences explode in our faces. Society sets out, for example, precisely like a bad-tempered and bullheaded parent, to discipline its children when they violate any of its mandates. But how stupid to punish men for the moral infirmities that lead to their misdemeanors, as if you were to fine a man for having influenza or jail him for tuberculosis! And conversely, how blind is the conventional tolerance that will let a man sneeze cold germs in his

neighbor's face and carry disease from door to door! Yet we are asked to respect the authority that can deal with vital matters no more intelligently than this.

Everywhere that Butler turns his gaze, his method is the same. What have edifices of financial safety and those of supernatural faith in common with each other? Butler puts them together, in the Musical Banks; rabbits of paradox begin popping out of his magician's hat. The instruments of credit clearly rest on faith; religion invites you to pile up riches in heaven. The deadly parallel has dozens of repercussions: the unwillingness of the Musical Bank managers to be paid in their own coinage, the malleability of the currency, the cheapness of the material from which it is made, the distribution of dividends every thirty thousand years.

When Butler considers education, he cuts through a similar clutter of delusion. The dead languages that tradition had exalted as the almost exclusively needful preparation for living are replaced in the Erewhonian Colleges of Unreason by hypothetical languages of the future. If in this way, however, Erewhon is a distorted mirror image of the real world, it criticizes by example as well as by imitation. The Erewhonians do not confine themselves to inculcating an ideal curriculum that would have no bearing on the way men actually think and behave. Their Professors of Worldly Wisdom counsel the young how impractical is the hope of influencing men by reason, and give them training in unreason by which to play upon the prejudices and superstitions of humanity. In the same way, while their worshipers of Ydgrun are slaves of convention (Ydgrun is an anagram for Mrs. Grundy), their High Ydgrunites, wisely going through the motions of conformity, do as they please in private.

The high point of Erewhon *is "The Book of the Machines." Since Darwin had found it useful to consider living beings as machines, Butler suggests, why should it not prove equally useful to consider machines as living beings? Then he proceeds to elaborate a brilliant argument to show how many features the machine and the living organism have in common, and how impossible it is to prove that machines are not an embryonic form of intelligent life. The primary effect of this tour de force is to reveal how much of the orthodox biologic argument is a loose series of imperfect analogies, and how often we erect our inability to deal with the more complex problems of biological existence into a denial of their reality. But Butler's most fantastic exercises in wit are always turning into creative intuitions that pierce deeper than at first he knew. Just as his straighteners*

and methods of treating moral offenses anticipate modern psychiatry and penology, so the Erewhonian fear of man's being enslaved by machines seems today a symbolic prophecy of the way in which the mere machinery of industrial civilization comes to dominate its purposes. Are we to blot out the sky with smoke of factories, cover the fruitful earth with barren asphalt and steel, and become, masters and men alike, a race of machine tenders, the beating of human hearts drowned out by the throb of dynamos?

These are the questions Butler asks. And it is noteworthy that they are no less the questions of common sense than those of paradox. The values Butler affirms are those of common sense, and are startling only because they are so seldom reached by abstract theory and so seldom maintained by academic philosophy. The great virtues, say the Erewhonians, and Butler with them, are good health, good luck, good sense, good nature, and a good balance of cash in hand. The man who has these qualities won't be a crank or fanatic—either religious or scientific—and he won't be a rigid adherent of outworn dogmas. He won't be bawling bloody suppression on those who disagree with him. In his own conduct he will show a decent regard for public opinion, but not let himself be bullied by it. He will be kindly and generous, but not weak and sentimental. He will reconcile sincerity with good breeding. He will do what he wants to do, and what he wants to do will be something useful. In him, life itself will grow and realize its possibilities more fully. Are not these things in fact what we desire of civilization and of ourselves as civilized men? Health, balance, growth, freedom: such are Butler's watchwords. Pushing his rebellion beyond all use and wont, but steering with the tiller of common sense, the crotchety rebel turns into the wise prophet. Humanity's cantankerous child has come full circle.

EREWHON

*** *Erewhon* was originally published in 1872. The selections given here are from Chapters 11 and 15 ***

Several Criminal Trials

IN EREWHON as in other countries there are some courts of justice that deal with special subjects. Misfortune generally, as I have above explained, is considered more or less criminal, but it admits of classification, and a court is assigned to each of the main heads under which it can be supposed to fall. Not very long after I had reached the capital I strolled into the Personal Bereavement Court, and was much both interested and pained by listening to the trial of a man who was accused of having just lost a wife to whom he had been tenderly attached, and who had left him with three little children, of whom the eldest was only three years old.

The defense which the prisoner's counsel endeavored to establish was, that the prisoner had never really loved his wife; but it broke down completely, for the public prosecutor called witness after witness who deposed to the fact that the couple had been devoted to one another, and the prisoner repeatedly wept as incidents were put in evidence that reminded him of the irreparable nature of the loss he had sustained. The jury returned a verdict of guilty after very little deliberation, but recommended the prisoner to mercy on the ground that he had but recently insured his wife's life for a considerable sum, and might be deemed lucky inasmuch as he had received the money without demur from the insurance company, though he had only paid two premiums.

I have just said that the jury found the prisoner guilty. When the judge passed sentence, I was struck with the way in which the prisoner's counsel was rebuked for having referred to a work in which the guilt of such misfortunes as the prisoner's was extenuated to a degree that roused the indignation of the court.

"We shall have," said the judge, "these crude and subversionary books from time to time until it is recognized as an axiom of morality that luck is the only fit object of human veneration. How far a man has any right to be more lucky and hence more venerable than his neighbors, is a point that always has been, and always will be, settled proximately by a kind of higgling and haggling of the market, and ultimately by brute force, but how-

ever this may be, it stands to reason that no man should be allowed to be unlucky to more than a very moderate extent."

Then, turning to the prisoner, the judge continued:—"You have suffered a great loss. Nature attaches a severe penalty to such offenses, and human law must emphasize the decrees of nature. But for the recommendation of the jury I should have given you six months' hard labor. I will, however, commute your sentence to one of three months, with the option of a fine of twenty-five per cent. of the money you have received from the insurance company."

The prisoner thanked the judge, and said that as he had no one to look after his children if he was sent to prison, he would embrace the option mercifully permitted him by his lordship, and pay the sum he had named. He was then removed from the dock.

The next case was that of a youth barely arrived at man's estate, who was charged with having been swindled out of large property during his minority by his guardian, who was also one of his nearest relations. His father had been long dead, and it was for this reason that his offense came on for trial in the Personal Bereavement Court. The lad, who was undefended, pleaded that he was young, inexperienced, greatly in awe of his guardian, and without independent professional advice. "Young man," said the judge sternly, "do not talk nonsense. People have no right to be young, inexperienced, greatly in awe of their guardians, and without independent professional advice. If by such indiscretions they outrage the moral sense of their friends, they must expect to suffer accordingly." He then ordered the prisoner to apologize to his guardian, and to receive twelve strokes with a cat-of-nine-tails.

But I shall perhaps best convey to the reader an idea of the entire perversion of thought which exists among this extraordinary people, by describing the public trial of a man who was accused of pulmonary consumption—an offense which was punished with death until quite recently. It did not occur till I had been some months in the country, and I am deviating from chronological order in giving it here; but I had perhaps better do so in order that I may exhaust this subject before proceeding to others. Moreover, I should never come to an end were I to keep to a strictly narrative form, and detail the infinite absurdities with which I daily came in contact.

The prisoner was placed in the dock, and the jury were sworn much as in Europe; almost all our own modes of procedure were reproduced, even to the requiring the prisoner to plead guilty or not guilty. He pleaded not guilty, and the case proceeded. The evidence for the prosecution was very strong; but I must do the court the justice to observe that the trial was abso-

lutely impartial. Counsel for the prisoner was allowed to urge everything that could be said in his defense: the line taken was that the prisoner was simulating consumption in order to defraud an insurance company, from which he was about to buy an annuity, and that he hoped thus to obtain it on more advantageous terms. If this could have been shown to be the case he would have escaped a criminal prosecution, and been sent to a hospital as for a moral ailment. The view, however, was one which could not be reasonably sustained, in spite of all the ingenuity and eloquence of one of the most celebrated advocates of the country. The case was only too clear, for the prisoner was almost at the point of death, and it was astonishing that he had not been tried and convicted long previously. His coughing was incessant during the whole trial, and it was all that the two jailors in charge of him could do to keep him on his legs until it was over.

The summing up of the judge was admirable. He dwelt upon every point that could be construed in favor of the prisoner, but as he proceeded it became clear that the evidence was too convincing to admit of doubt, and there was but one opinion in the court as to the impending verdict when the jury retired from the box They were absent for about ten minutes, and on their return the foreman pronounced the prisoner guilty. There was a faint murmur of applause, but it was instantly repressed. The judge then proceeded to pronounce sentence in words which I can never forget, and which I copied out into a note-book next day from the report that was published in the leading newspaper. I must condense it somewhat, and nothing which I could say would give more than a faint idea of the solemn, not to say majestic, severity with which it was delivered. The sentence was as follows:—

"Prisoner at the bar, you have been accused of the great crime of laboring under pulmonary consumption, and after an impartial trial before a jury of your countrymen, you have been found guilty. Against the justice of the verdict I can say nothing: the evidence against you was conclusive, and it only remains for me to pass such a sentence upon you, as shall satisfy the ends of the law. That sentence must be a very severe one. It pains me much to see one who is yet so young, and whose prospects in life were otherwise so excellent, brought to this distressing condition by a constitution which I can only regard as radically vicious; but yours is no case for compassion: this is not your first offense: you have led a career of crime, and have only profited by the leniency shown you upon past occasions, to offend yet more seriously against the laws and institutions of your country. You were convicted of aggravated bronchitis last year: and I find that though you are now only twenty-three years old, you have been imprisoned on no less than fourteen occasions for illnesses of a more or less hateful character; in fact

it is not too much to say that you have spent the greater part of your life in a jail.

"It is all very well for you to say that you came of unhealthy parents, and had a severe accident in your childhood which permanently undermined your constitution; excuses such as these are the ordinary refuge of the criminal, but they cannot for one moment be listened to by the ear of justice. I am not here to enter upon curious metaphysical questions as to the origin of this or that—questions to which there would be no end were their introduction once tolerated, and which would result in throwing the only guilt on the tissues of the primordial cell, or on the elementary gases. There is no question of how you came to be wicked, but only this—namely, are you wicked or not? This has been decided in the affirmative, neither can I hesitate for a single moment to say that it has been decided justly. You are a bad and dangerous person, and stand branded in the eyes of your fellow-countrymen with one of the most heinous known offenses.

"It is not my business to justify the law: the law may in some cases have its inevitable hardships, and I may feel regret at times that I have not the option of passing a less severe sentence than I am compelled to do. But yours is no such case; on the contrary, had not the capital punishment for consumption been abolished, I should certainly inflict it now.

"It is intolerable that an example of such terrible enormity should be allowed to go at large unpunished. Your presence in the society of respectable people would lead the less able-bodied to think more lightly of all forms of illness; neither can it be permitted that you should have the chance of corrupting unborn beings who might hereafter pester you. The unborn must not be allowed to come near you: and this not so much for their protection (for they are our natural enemies), as for our own; for since they will not be utterly gainsaid, it must be seen to that they shall be quartered upon those who are least likely to corrupt them.

"But independently of this consideration, and independently of the physical guilt which attaches itself to a crime so great as yours, there is yet another reason why we should be unable to show you mercy, even if we were inclined to do so. I refer to the existence of a class of men who lie hidden among us, and who are called physicians. Were the severity of the law or the current feeling of the country to be relaxed never so slightly, these abandoned persons, who are now compelled to practise secretly and who can be consulted only at the greatest risk, would become frequent visitors in every household, their organization and their intimate acquaintance with all family secrets would give them a power, both social and political, which nothing could resist. The head of the household would become subordinate to the family doctor, who would interfere between man and wife, between

master and servant, until the doctors should be the only depositaries of power in the nation, and have all that we hold precious at their mercy. A time of universal dephysicalization would ensue; medicine-vendors of all kinds would abound in our streets and advertise in all our newspapers. There is one remedy for this, and one only. It is that which the laws of this country have long received and acted upon, and consists in the sternest repression of all diseases whatsoever, as soon as their existence is made manifest to the eye of the law. Would that that eye were far more piercing than it is.

"But I will enlarge no further upon things that are themselves so obvious. You may say that it is not your fault. The answer is ready enough at hand, and it amounts to this—that if you had been born of healthy and well-to-do parents, and been well taken care of when you were a child, you would never have offended against the laws of your country, nor found yourself in your present disgraceful position. If you tell me that you had no hand in your parentage and education, and that it is therefore unjust to lay these things to your charge, I answer that whether your being in a consumption is your fault or no, it is a fault in you, and it is my duty to see that against such faults as this the commonwealth shall be protected. You may say that it is your misfortune to be criminal; I answer that it is your crime to be unfortunate.

"Lastly, I should point out that even though the jury had acquitted you—a supposition that I cannot seriously entertain—I should have felt it my duty to inflict a sentence hardly less severe than that which I must pass at present; for the more you had been found guiltless of the crime imputed to you, the more you would have been found guilty of one hardly less heinous—I mean the crime of having been maligned unjustly.

"I do not hesitate therefore to sentence you to imprisonment, with hard labor, for the rest of your miserable existence. During that period I would earnestly entreat you to repent of the wrongs you have done already, and to entirely reform the constitution of your whole body. I entertain but little hope that you will pay attention to my advice; you are already far too abandoned. Did it rest with myself, I should add nothing in mitigation of the sentence which I have passed, but it is the merciful provision of the law that even the most hardened criminal shall be allowed some one of the three official remedies, which is to be prescribed at the time of his conviction. I shall therefore order that you receive two tablespoonfuls of castor oil daily, until the pleasure of the court be further known."

When the sentence was concluded the prisoner acknowledged in a few scarcely audible words that he was justly punished, and that he had had a fair trial. He was then removed to the prison from which he was never to return. There was a second attempt at applause when the judge had finished

speaking, but as before it was at once repressed, and though the feeling of the court was strongly against the prisoner, there was no show of any violence against him, if one may except a little hooting from the bystanders when he was being removed in the prisoners' van. Indeed, nothing struck me more during my whole sojourn in the country, than the general respect for law and order.

Musical Banks

Now I had already collected that the mercantile affairs of the Erewhonians were conducted on a totally different system from our own, I had, however, gathered little hitherto, except that they had two distinct commercial systems, of which the one appealed more strongly to the imagination than anything to which we are accustomed in Europe, inasmuch as the banks that were conducted upon this system were decorated in the most profuse fashion, and all mercantile transactions were accompanied with music, so that they were called Musical Banks, though the music was hideous to a European ear.

As for the system itself I never understood it, neither can I do so now: they have a code in connection with it, which I have not the slightest doubt that they understand, but no foreigner can hope to do so. One rule runs into, and against, another as in a most complicated grammar, or as in Chinese pronunciation, wherein I am told that the slightest change in accentuation or tone of voice alters the meaning of a whole sentence. Whatever is incoherent in my description must be referred to the fact of my never having attained to a full comprehension of the subject.

So far, however, as I could collect anything certain, I gathered that they have two distinct currencies, each under the control of its own banks and mercantile codes. One of these (the one with the Musical Banks) was supposed to be *the* system, and to give out the currency in which all monetary transactions should be carried on; and as far as I could see, all who wished to be considered respectable, kept a larger or smaller balance at these banks. On the other hand, if there is one thing of which I am more sure than another, it is that the amount so kept had no direct commercial value in the outside world; I am sure that the managers and cashiers of the Musical Banks were not paid in their own currency. Mr. Nosnibor used to go to these banks, or rather to the great mother bank of the city, sometimes but not very often. He was a pillar of one of the other kind of banks, though he appeared to hold some minor office also in the musical ones. The ladies generally went alone; as indeed was the case in most families, except on state occasions.

I had long wanted to know more of this strange system, and had the greatest desire to accompany my hostess and her daughters. I had seen them go out almost every morning since my arrival and had noticed that they carried their purses in their hands, not exactly ostentatiously, yet just so as that those who met them should see whither they were going. . . .

We passed through several streets of more or less considerable houses, and at last turning round a corner we came upon a large piazza, at the end of which was a magnificent building, of a strange but noble architecture and of great antiquity. It did not open directly on to the piazza, there being a screen, through which was an archway, between the piazza and the actual precincts of the bank. On passing under the archway we entered upon a green sward, round which there ran an arcade or cloister, while in front of us uprose the majestic towers of the bank and its venerable front, which was divided into three deep recesses and adorned with all sorts of marbles and many sculptures. On either side there were beautiful old trees wherein the birds were busy by the hundred, and a number of quaint but substantial houses of singularly comfortable appearance; they were situated in the midst of orchards and gardens, and gave me an impression of great peace and plenty.

Indeed it had been no error to say that this building was one that appealed to the imagination; it did more—it carried both imagination and judgment by storm. It was an epic in stone and marble, and so powerful was the effect it produced on me, that as I beheld it I was charmed and melted. I felt more conscious of the existence of a remote past. One knows of this always, but the knowledge is never so living as in the actual presence of some witness to the life of bygone ages. I felt how short a space of human life was the period of our own existence. I was more impressed with my own littleness, and much more inclinable to believe that the people whose sense of the fitness of things was equal to the upraising of so serene a handiwork, were hardly likely to be wrong in the conclusions they might come to upon any subject. My feeling certainly was that the currency of this bank must be the right one.

We crossed the sward and entered the building. If the outside had been impressive the inside was even more so. It was very lofty and divided into several parts by walls which rested upon massive pillars, the windows were filled with stained glass descriptive of the principal commercial incidents of the bank for many ages. In a remote part of the building there were men and boys singing. . . . As soon as the singing was over, the ladies requested me to stay where I was while they went inside the place from which it had seemed to come.

During their absence certain reflections forced themselves upon me.

In the first place, it struck me as strange that the building should be so nearly empty; I was almost alone, and the few besides myself had been led by curiosity, and had no intention of doing business with the bank. But there might be more inside. I stole up to the curtain, and ventured to draw the extreme edge of it on one side. No, there was hardly any one there. I saw a large number of cashiers, all at their desks ready to pay checks, and one or two who seemed to be the managing partners. I also saw my hostess and her daughters and two or three other ladies; also three or four old women and the boys from one of the neighboring Colleges of Unreason; but there was no one else. This did not look as though the bank was doing a very large business; and yet I had always been told that every one in the city dealt with this establishment. . . .

I ventured to take a second look, and saw Zulora in the very act of giving a piece of paper which looked like a check to one of the cashiers. He did not examine it, but putting his hand into an antique coffer hard by, he pulled out a quantity of metal pieces apparently at random, and handed them over without counting them; neither did Zulora count them, but put them into her purse and went back to her seat after dropping a few pieces of the other coinage into an alms box that stood by the cashier's side. Mrs. Nosnibor and Arowhena then did likewise, but a little later they gave all (so far as I could see) that they had received from the cashier back to a verger, who I have no doubt put it back into the coffer from which it had been taken. They then began making towards the curtain; whereon I let it drop and retreated to a reasonable distance.

They soon joined me. For some few minutes we all kept silence, but at last I ventured to remark that the bank was not so busy to-day as it probably often was. On this Mrs. Nosnibor said that it was indeed melancholy to see what little heed people paid to the most precious of all institutions. I could say nothing in reply, but I have ever been of opinion that the greater part of mankind do approximately know where they get that which does them good.

Mrs. Nosnibor went on to say that I must not think there was any want of confidence in the bank because I had seen so few people there; the heart of the country was thoroughly devoted to these establishments, and any sign of their being in danger would bring in support from the most unexpected quarters. It was only because people knew them to be so very safe that in some cases (as she lamented to say in Mr. Nosnibor's) they felt that their support was unnecessary. Moreover these institutions never departed from the safest and most approved banking principles. Thus they never allowed interest on deposit, a thing now frequently done by certain bubble companies, which by doing an illegitimate trade had drawn many customers

away; and even the shareholders were fewer than formerly, owing to the innovations of these unscrupulous persons, for the Musical Banks paid little or no dividend, but divided their profits by way of bonus on the original shares once in every thirty thousand years; and as it was now only two thousand years since there had been one of these distributions, people felt that they could not hope for another in their own time and preferred investments whereby they got some more tangible return; all which, she said, was very melancholy to think of.

Having made these last admissions, she returned to her original statement, namely, that every one in the country really supported these banks. As to the fewness of the people, and the absence of the able-bodied, she pointed out to me with some justice that this was exactly what we ought to expect. The men who were most conversant about the stability of human institutions, such as the lawyers, men of science, doctors, statesmen, painters, and the like, were just those who were most likely to be misled by their own fancied accomplishments, and to be made unduly suspicious by their licentious desire for greater present return, which was at the root of nine-tenths of the opposition; by their vanity, which would prompt them to affect superiority to the prejudices of the vulgar; and by the stings of their own conscience, which was constantly upbraiding them in the most cruel manner on account of their bodies, which were generally diseased.

Let a person's intellect (she continued) be ever so sound, unless his body is in absolute health, he can form no judgment worth having on matters of this kind. The body is everything. it need not perhaps be such a strong body (she said this because she saw that I was thinking of the old and infirm-looking folks whom I had seen in the bank), but it must be in perfect health, in this case, the less active strength it had the more free would be the working of the intellect, and therefore the sounder the conclusion. The people, then, whom I had seen at the bank were in reality the very ones whose opinions were most worth having, they declared its advantages to be incalculable, and even professed to consider the immediate return to be far larger than they were entitled to, and so she ran on, nor did she leave off till we had got back to the house.

She might say what she pleased, but her manner carried no conviction, and later on I saw signs of general indifference to these banks that were not to be mistaken. Their supporters often denied it, but the denial was generally so couched as to add another proof of its existence In commercial panics, and in times of general distress, the people as a mass did not so much as even think of turning to these banks. A few might do so, some from habit and early training, some from the instinct that prompts us to catch at any straw when we think ourselves drowning, but few from a genuine belief that the

Musical Banks could save them from financial ruin, if they were unable to meet their engagements in the other kind of currency.

In conversation with one of the Musical Bank managers I ventured to hint this as plainly as politeness would allow. He said that it had been more or less true till lately; but that *now* they had put fresh stained glass windows into all the banks in the country, and repaired the buildings, and enlarged the organs; the presidents, moreover, had taken to riding in omnibuses and talking nicely to people in the streets, and to remembering the ages of their children, and giving them things when they were naughty, so that all would henceforth go smoothly.

"But haven't you done anything to the money itself?" said I, timidly.

"It is not necessary," he rejoined; "not in the least necessary, I assure you."

And yet any one could see that the money given out at these banks was not that with which people bought their bread, meat, and clothing. It was like it at a first glance, and was stamped with designs that were often of great beauty; it was not, again, a spurious coinage, made with the intention that it should be mistaken for the money in actual use; it was more like a toy money, or the counters used for certain games at cards; for, notwithstanding the beauty of the designs, the material on which they were stamped was as nearly valueless as possible. Some were covered with tin foil, but the greater part were frankly of a cheap base metal the exact nature of which I was not able to determine. Indeed they were made of a great variety of metals, or, perhaps more accurately, alloys, some of which were hard, while others would bend easily and assume almost any form which their possessor might desire at the moment.

Of course every one knew that their commercial value was *nil*, but all those who wished to be considered respectable thought it incumbent upon them to retain a few coins in their possession, and to let them be seen from time to time in their hands and purses. Not only this, but they would stick to it that the current coin of the realm was dross in comparison with the Musical Bank coinage. Perhaps, however, the strangest thing of all was that these very people would at times make fun in small ways of the whole system; indeed, there was hardly any insinuation against it which they would not tolerate and even applaud in their daily newspapers if written anonymously, while if the same thing were said without ambiguity to their faces—nominative case verb and accusative being all in their right places and doubt impossible—they would consider themselves very seriously and justly outraged, and accuse the speaker of being unwell.

I never could understand (neither can I quite do so now, though I begin to see better what they mean) why a single currency should not suffice them; it would seem to me as though all their dealings would have been

thus greatly simplified; but I was met with a look of horror if ever I dared to hint at it. Even those who to my certain knowledge kept only just enough money at the Musical Banks to swear by, would call the other banks (where their securities really lay) cold, deadening, paralyzing, and the like. . . .

Few people would speak quite openly and freely before [the *Musical* Bank managers], which struck me as a very bad sign. When they were in the room every one would talk as though all currency save that of the Musical Banks should be abolished; and yet they knew perfectly well that even the cashiers themselves hardly used the Musical Bank money more than other people. It was expected of them that they should appear to do so, but this was all. The less thoughtful of them did not seem particularly unhappy, but many were plainly sick at heart, though perhaps they hardly knew it, and would not have owned to being so. Some few were opponents of the whole system; but these were liable to be dismissed from their employment at any moment, and this rendered them very careful, for a man who had *once been cashier at a Musical Bank was out of the field for other employ-*ment, and was generally unfitted for it by reason of that course of treatment which was commonly called his education. In fact it was a career from which retreat was virtually impossible, and into which young men were generally induced to enter before they could be reasonably expected, considering their training, to have formed any opinions of their own Not unfrequently, indeed, they were induced, by what we in England should call undue influence, concealment, and fraud. Few indeed were those who had the courage to insist on seeing both sides of the question before they committed themselves to what was practically a leap in the dark. One would have thought that caution in this respect was an elementary principle,—one of the first things that an honorable man would teach his boy to understand; but in practice it was not so.

I even saw cases in which parents bought the right of presenting to the office of cashier at one of these banks, with the fixed determination that some one of their sons (perhaps a mere child) should fill it. There was the lad himself—growing up with every promise of becoming a good and honorable man—but utterly without warning concerning the iron shoe which his natural protector was providing for him. Who could say that the whole thing would not end in a life-long lie, and vain chafing to escape? I confess that there were few things in Erewhon which shocked me more than this.

THE COMIC SPIRIT AND CIVILIZED LIFE



THE MOST astounding aspect of Meredith is his elaboration of sur-face. The Elizabethans were not more ornate nor the metaphysicals more intricate. His pages garland witty metaphor and aphorism with profuse imagery; he hunts a phrase like Apollo pursuing Daphne and subjects it to more transformations than Proteus; his explosions of epigram are constant, almost fatiguing, in their coruscations. He enmeshes his characters in a Nessus shirt of allusion clinging and caressing even as it stings; he stabs into dark recesses of their feelings with a sword of intellectual light. He besets them with imps ironic. Then out of some such labyrinthine cloud splendor of words he will drop gnomic brevities enigmatic. To read Meredith is athletically challenging to the wits, as of at once wrestling with Briareus and striving to race sandals mercurial.

The reader may perceive from our slightly irreverent echo of his style some of its weaknesses. There is a touch of dandyism, a suspicion of strain, more than a danger of making us feel bedeviled with too ostentatious a byplay. The trace of their creator is on even the conversation of his characters; they talk often in cryptic flashes, like men fencing on t[illegible]

wires, their reticences no less than their utterance sharp with innuendo. But his merits sing aloud in clearest melody. The language, so often tortuous, is even more often lyrical, iridescent· it rains, he will tell us, "with a great noise of eager gobbling," and we hear the very tumult of the downpour. His wit dances. His packed revelations of character plumb depths of insight; with a single dramatic scene or turn of phrase he can blaze illumination. If he wears out our energies with the superabundance of his own, the fault is less his artificiality than our indolence.

The strange thing is that all this magnificent virtuosity is maneuvered in the service of doctrines by no means complex. Meredith sees man as a part of nature, his spirit as truly natural as any of his grosser animal cravings. The mind and heart of man are merely nature's highest flowering. Their difficulty is one of harmony They must pursue their own needs without cutting themselves loose from the sustaining element in which they are rooted, they must remain in nature without denying their own insights There are no supernatural forces in Meredith. Intelligence is the seed of growth, and it can germinate only in the soil of society. As humanity slowly civilizes itself, what at first may have been done by natural selection, and later, perhaps, by instinct, can only be furthered by intelligence.

Meredith's appeal is consequently to intelligence, and his instrument is civilized laughter. He is not interested in those problems that are still plaguing humanity only because the tail has not caught up with the vanguard. Those are concerns for legislation, law, perhaps morality. But the dilemmas for which law is too blunt and even morality too inflexible are to be approached by critical intelligence. What may not be punished by law or condemned by morals may yet be foolish, weak, inadequate, ridiculous, contemptible, may be no less disastrous to our spiritual health and balance than the darker evils. It is against the failings that the best of us have not yet overcome, not yet even realized as failings, that Meredith wings his attack. If we entertain ourselves with the risible image of human follies in certain ideal embodiments, to the degree that we ourselves are civilized we shall find ourselves realizing that it is not only our next-door neighbor we find so mirrored, and be spurred to self-correction. For Meredith comedy is thus an instrument of social improvement bringing critical laughter to bear upon conscience.

In The Egoist his method achieves its most brilliant success. The ego is no doubt one of the most powerful, as it is one of the most sensitive, springs of action During the formative eras of society its most voracious

activities may still be valiant, "socially valuable, nationally serviceable." But, in a civilized world, unchecked, it becomes a devouring monster. Let us anatomize its manifestations in its later and more subtle stages, Meredith suggests, and understand how disastrously it may betray us. Sir Willoughby Patterne of Patterne Hall may stand as the archetype, at once comic and pitiful, of what its destructions may be.

Sir Willoughby is wealthy, well bred, handsome, even intelligent and witty. He is not devoid of generosity, provided it be known that he is being generous; not incapable of love and sacrifice, so long as his moral eminence is admired. But he can be brought to any meanness by his need to be seen always as the hero in the center of the stage. He cannot bear being less than another, he will employ every art and deception to avoid being humiliated, he fries in flames of agony at the thought of being laughed at. He is a benign potentate to his slavish household. He breathes incense from the hopeless devotion of Laetitia Dale. Jilted by the dashing Constantia Durham, who has caught a revealing glimpse of the monster within this idol, he has exhausted every subterfuge to pull the wool over society's eyes and make it appear that he deserted her. And still it must be emphasized that Sir Willoughby can be kind and even noble. But through his resistance to playing any less than the stellar role he is humiliated, brought down, and betrayed; the logic of his own writhings pushes him in the end to an uncommonly inglorious surrender. When, at last, he has lost the delicious Clara Middleton, and descended to pursue his disillusioned and no longer adoring Laetitia with whimperings to marry him, he still tries in his own mind to deny the magnitude of his defeat. "But he had the lady with the brains!" he exults. "He had," Meredith promises us dryly; "and he was to learn the nature of that possession in the woman who is our wife."

In scene after scene, there is an extraordinary ingenuity in making the most trivial word or movement light up character. Immediately after his jilting by Miss Durham, Willoughby rides home to bathe in the solace of Miss Dale's devotion. He leans over her, chattering in dazed self-protective dissimulation of how wonderfully lucky he is. Laetitia, who has not heard the catastrophe, asks after Miss Durham's health: "Durham?" he answers. "There is no Miss Durham to my knowledge." So do those who have offended his pride become "extinct." But Meredith does not always confine the revelation to a mere glance of connivance with the reader; sometimes it ricochets back upon the victim, as when Clara wrings his sensitivity by a

mere deliberate closing of her eyes upon the loving portrait he is painting of himself. Again, telling her in the guise of humble confession that he has "too much of the fallen archangel's pride," and "glorying in the black flames demoniacal wherewith he crowned himself," how profound is his vexation to hear her say: "Can you not correct it?"

It must not be thought that all the castigation is reserved for the unfortunate Willoughby. Clara, too, receives a share, and the wittily cryptic Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, the vulgar Lady Busshe, and that superb scholarly Juggernaut, Dr. Middleton. Even Vernon Whitford and Laetitia Dale are not immune: witness a scene where each has private and painful reasons for rejecting the commendations for constancy and perfect friendship the other tries persistently to bestow. But Willoughby is the central figure. He is subjected to the most piercing analysis, pursued with almost torturing cruelty. We follow this pursuit with a curiously ambiguous gloating. We rejoice to see this complacent, proud, and self-centered figure grown desperate, join the chase ourselves in a kind of snarling glee. But when he is brought down at last, there is something like pain and panic as well, not merely in commiseration, but in a deeper fellowship For we have gradually been made to realize that the self that wraps Sir Willoughby in burning torments is there in us as well, though we may have rendered it less rapacious or disguised it better to ourselves or to the world. The revelation Sir Willoughby achieves in us is self-revelation, and the mirth he arouses self-critical. He is an idealized mirror of our own shortcomings.

Meredith's wit and poetry are a wit and poetry of sanity. He reveals us to ourselves for such discipline and striving as the criticism suggests. "If you believe that our civilization is founded in common sense," he tells us, "you will, when comtemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead," and he paints its portrait It is not more heavenly than men's own intelligence, never far ahead of them, never in the rear. "It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun." Its primary concern is with men's honesty and shapeliness of character: "whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked . . . whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually or in the bulk; the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign, and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit."

THE EGOIST

««« The Egoist was first published in 1879. The selection given here is from Chapter 10 »»»

Sir Willoughby Supplies the Title for Himself

[*Vernon Whitford, mentioned in the opening sentence, is thinking of becoming a free-lance writer in London; "young Crossjay" is the son of a Captain of Marines, a distant cousin of Sir Willoughby's, whom Vernon has been educating and whom he now wants Willoughby to have prepared for entering the Navy or Marines.*]

NOW VERNON was useful to his cousin; he was the accomplished secretary of a man who governed his estates shrewdly and diligently, but had been once or twice unlucky in his judgements pronounced from the magisterial bench as a Justice of the Peace, on which occasions a half-column of trenchant English supported by an apposite classical quotation impressed Sir Willoughby with the value of such a secretary in a controversy. He had no fear of that fiery dragon of scorching breath—the newspaper Press—while Vernon was his right-hand man; and as he intended to enter Parliament, he foresaw the greater need of him. Furthermore, he liked his cousin to date his own controversial writings, on classical subjects, from Patterne Hall. It caused his house to shine in a *foreign field*, proved the service of scholarship by giving it a flavour of a bookish aristocracy that, though not so well worth having, and indeed in itself contemptible, is above the material and titular; one cannot quite say how. There, however, is the flavour. Dainty sauces are the life, the nobility, of famous dishes; taken alone, the former would be nauseating, the latter plebeian. It is thus, or somewhat so, when you have a poet, still better a scholar, attached to your household. Sir Willoughby deserved to have him, for he was alert his county friends in his apprehension of the flavour bestowed by the rare and having him, he had made them conscious of their deficiency. His cook, M. Dehors, pupil of the great Godefroy, was not the only French cook in the county; but his cousin and secretary, the rising scholar, the elegant essayist, was an unparalleled decoration; of his kind, of course. Personally, we laugh at him; you had better not, unless you are fain to show that the higher world of polite literature is unknown to you. Sir Willoughby could create an abject silence at a county dinner-table, by an allusion to Vernon “

work at home upon his Etruscans or his Dorians"; and he paused a moment to let the allusion sink, laughed audibly to himself over his eccentric cousin, *and let him rest.*

In addition, Sir Willoughby abhorred the loss of a familiar face in his domestic circle. He thought ill of servants who could accept their dismissal without petitioning to stay with him. A servant that gave warning partook of a certain fiendishness. Vernon's project of leaving the Hall offended and alarmed the sensitive gentleman. "I shall have to hand Letty Dale to him at last!" he thought, yielding in bitter generosity to the conditions imposed on him by the ungenerousness of another. For, since his engagement to Miss Middleton, his electrically forethoughtful mind had seen in Miss Dale, if she stayed in the neighbourhood, and remained unmarried, the governess of his infant children, often consulting with him. But here was a prospect dashed out. The two, then, may marry, and live in a cottage on the borders of his park; and Vernon can retain his post, and Lætitia her devotion. The risk of her casting it off had to be faced. Marriage has been known to have such an effect on the most faithful of women, that a great passion fades to naught in their volatile bosoms when they have taken a husband. We see in women especially the triumph of the animal over the spiritual. Nevertheless, risks must be run for a purpose in view.

Having no taste for a discussion with Vernon, whom it was his habit to *confound by breaking away from him abruptly when he had delivered his* opinion, he left it to both the persons interesting themselves in young Crossjay to imagine that he was meditating on the question of the lad, and to imagine that it would be wise to leave him to meditate; for he could be preternaturally acute in reading any of his fellow-creatures if they crossed the current of his feelings. And, meanwhile, he instructed the ladies Eleanor and Isabel to bring Lætitia Dale on a visit to the Hall, where dinner-parties were soon to be given and a pleasing talker would be wanted; where also a woman of intellect, steeped in a splendid sentiment, hitherto a miracle of female constancy, might stir a younger woman to some emulation. Definitely to resolve to bestow Lætitia upon Vernon, was more than he could do; enough that he held the card.

Regarding Clara, his genius for perusing the heart which was not in perfect harmony with him through the series of responsive movements to his own, informed him of a something in her character that might have suggested to Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson her indefensible, absurd "rogue in porcelain." Idea there was none in that phrase; yet, if you looked on Clara as a delicately inimitable porcelain beauty, the suspicion of a delicately inimitable ripple over her features touched a thought of innocent roguery, wild-wood roguery; the likeness to the costly and lovely substance appeared to

admit a fitness in the dubious epithet. He detested but was haunted by the phrase.

She certainly had at times the look of the nymph that has gazed too long on the faun, and has unwittingly copied his lurking lip and long sliding eye. Her play with young Crossjay resembled a return of the lady to the cat; she flung herself into it as if her real vitality had been in suspense till she saw the boy. Sir Willoughby by no means disapproved of a physical liveliness that promised him health in his mate; but he began to feel in their conversations that she did not sufficiently think of making herself a nest for him. Steely points were opposed to him when he, figuratively, bared his bosom to be taken to the softest and fairest. She reasoned: in other words, armed her ignorance. She reasoned against him publicly, and lured Vernon to support her. Influence is to be counted for power, and her influence over Vernon was displayed in her persuading him to dance one evening at Lady Culmer's, after his melancholy exhibitions of himself in the art; and not only did she persuade him to stand up fronting her, she manœuvred him through the dance like a clever boy cajoling a top to come to him without reeling, both to Vernon's contentment and to Sir Willoughby's, for he was the last man to object to a manifestation of power in his bride. Considering her influence with Vernon, he renewed the discourse upon young Crossjay; and, as he was addicted to system, he took her into his confidence, that she *might* be taught to look to him and act for him.

"Old Vernon has not spoken to you again of that lad?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. Whitford has asked me."

"He does not ask me, my dear!"

"He may fancy me of greater aid than I am."

"You see, my love, if he puts Crossjay on me, he will be off. He has this craze for 'enlisting' his pen in London, as he calls it; and I am accustomed to him; I don't like to think of him as a hack scribe, writing nonsense from dictation to earn a pitiful subsistence; I want him here; and, supposing he goes, he offends me; he loses a friend; and it will *not* be the first time that a friend has tried me too far; but, if he offends me, he is extinct."

"Is what?" cried Clara, with a look of fright.

"He becomes to me at once as if he had never been. He is extinct."

"In spite of your affection?"

"On account of it, I might say. Our nature is mysterious, and *mine* as much so as any. Whatever my regrets, he goes out. This is not a language I talk to the world. I do the man no harm; *I am not to be named unchristian*. But! . . ."

Sir Willoughby mildly shrugged, and indicated a spreading out of the arms.

"But do, do talk to me as you talk to the world, Willoughby; give me some relief!"

"My own Clara, we are one. You should know me, at my worst, we will say, if you like, as well as at my best."

"Should I speak too?"

"What could you have to confess?"

She hung silent: the wave of an insane resolution swelled in her bosom and subsided before she said, "Cowardice, incapacity to speak."

"*Women!*" *said he.*

We do not expect so much of women; the heroic virtues as little as the vices. They have not to unfold the scroll of character.

He resumed, and by his tone she understood that she was now in the inner temple of him: "I tell you these things, I quite acknowledge they do not elevate me. They help to constitute my character. I tell you most humbly that I have in me much too much of the fallen archangel's pride."

Clara bowed her head over a sustained indrawn breath.

"It must be pride," he said, in a revery superinduced by her thoughtfulness over the revelation, and glorying in the black flames demoniacal wherewith he crowned himself.

"Can you not correct it?" said she.

He replied, profoundly vexed by disappointment. "I am what I am. It might be demonstrated to you mathematically that it is corrected by equivalents or substitutions in my character. If it be a failing—assuming that."

"It seems one to me: so cruelly to punish Mr. Whitford for seeking to improve his fortunes."

"He reflects on my share in his fortunes. He has had but to apply to me, for his honorarium to be doubled."

"He wishes for independence."

"Independence of *me!*"

"Liberty!"

"At *my expense!*"

"Oh, Willoughby."

"Ay, but this is the world, and I know it, my love, and beautiful as your incredulity may be, you will find it more comforting to confide in my knowledge of the selfishness of the world. My sweetest, you will?—you do! For a breath of difference between us is intolerable. Do you not feel how it breaks our magic ring? One small fissure, and we have the world with its muddy deluge!—But my subject was old Vernon. Yes, I pay for Crossjay, if Vernon consents to stay. I waive my own scheme for the lad, though I think it the better one. Now, then, to induce Vernon to stay. He has his

ideas about staying under a mistress of the household; and therefore, not to contest it—he is a man of no argument; a sort of lunatic determination takes the place of it with old Vernon!—let him settle close by me, in one of my cottages; very well, and to settle him we must marry him."

"Who is there?" said Clara, beating for the lady in her mind.

"Women," said Willoughby, "are born match-makers, and the most persuasive is a young bride. With a man—and a man like old Vernon!—she is irresistible. It is my wish, and that arms you. It is your wish, that subjugates him. If he goes, he goes for good. If he stays, he is my friend. I deal simply with him, as with every one. It is the secret of authority. Now Miss Dale will soon lose her father. He exists on a pension; she has the prospect of having to leave the neighbourhood of the Hall, unless she is established near us. Her whole heart is in this region; it is the poor soul's passion. Count on her agreeing. But she will require a little wooing: and old Vernon wooing! Picture the scene to yourself, my love. His notion of wooing, I suspect, will be to treat the lady like a lexicon, and turn over the leaves for the word, and fly through the leaves for another word, and so get a sentence. Don't frown at the poor old fellow, my Clara; some have the language on their tongues, and some have not. Some are very dry sticks; manly men, honest fellows, but so cut away, so polished away from the sex, that they are in absolute want of outsiders to supply the silken filaments to attach them. Actually!" Sir Willoughby laughed in Clara's face to relax the dreamy stoniness of her look. "But I can assure you, my dearest, I have seen it. Vernon does not know how to speak—as *we* speak. He has, or he had, what is called a sneaking affection for Miss Dale. It was the most amusing thing possible: his courtship!—the air of a dog with an uneasy conscience, trying to reconcile himself with his master! We were all in fits of laughter. Of course it came to nothing."

"Will Mr. Whitford," said Clara, "offend you to extinction if he declines?"

Willoughby breathed an affectionate "Tush," to her silliness.

"We bring them together, as we best can. You see, Clara, I desire, and I will make some sacrifices to detain him."

"But what do you sacrifice?—a cottage?" said Clara, combative at all points.

"An ideal, perhaps. I lay no stress on sacrifice. I strongly object to separations. And therefore, you will say, I prepare the ground for unions? Put your influence to good service, my love. I believe you could persuade him to give us the Highland fling on the drawing-room table."

"There is nothing to say to him of Crossjay?"

"We hold Crossjay in reserve."

"It is urgent."

"Trust me. I have my ideas. I am not idle. That boy bids fair for a capital horseman. Eventualities might . . ." Sir Willoughby murmured to himself, and addressing his bride: "The cavalry? If we put him into the cavalry, we might make a gentleman of him—not be ashamed of him. Or, under certain eventualities, the Guards. Think it over, my love De Craye, who will, I assume, act best man for me, supposing old Vernon to pull at the collar, is a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Guards, a thorough gentleman—of the brainless class, if you like, but an elegant fellow; an Irishman, you will see him, and I should like to set a naval lieutenant beside him in a drawing-room, for you to compare them and consider the model you would choose for a boy you are interested in. Horace is grace and gallantry incarnate; fatuous, probably: I have always been too friendly with him to examine closely. He made himself one of my dogs, though my elder, and seemed to like to be at my heels. One of the few men's faces I can call admirably handsome,—with nothing behind it, perhaps. As Vernon says, 'a nothing picked by the vultures and bleached by the desert.' Not a bad talker, if you are satisfied with keeping up the ball. He will amuse you. Old Horace does not know how amusing he is!"

"Did Mr. Whitford say that of Colonel De Craye?"

"I forget the person of whom he said it So you have noticed old Vernon's foible? Quote him one of his epigrams, and he is in motion head and heels! It is an infallible receipt for tuning him. If I want to have him in good temper, I have only to remark, 'as you said.' I straighten his back instantly."

"I," said Clara, "have noticed chiefly his anxiety concerning the boy, for which I admire him."

"Creditable, if not particularly far-sighted and sagacious. Well then, my dear, attack him at once: lead him to the subject of our fair neighbour. She is to be our guest for a week or so, and the whole affair might be concluded far enough to fix him before she leaves She is at present awaiting the arrival of a cousin to attend on her father. A little gentle pushing will precipitate old Vernon on his knees as far as he ever can unbend them, but when a lady is made ready to expect a declaration, you know, why, she does not—does she?—demand the entire formula?—though some beautiful fortresses . . ."

He enfolded her. Clara was growing hardened to it. To this she was fated; and not seeing any way of escape, she invoked a friendly frost to strike her blood, and passed through the minute unfeelingly. Having passed it, she reproached herself for making so much of it, thinking it a lesser endurance than to listen to him. What could she do?—she was caged, by her word of honour, as she at one time thought, by her cowardice, at another;

and dimly sensible that the latter was a stronger lock than the former, she mused on the abstract question whether a woman's cowardice can be so absolute as to cast her into the jaws of her aversion. Is it to be conceived? Is there not a moment when it stands at bay? But haggard-visaged Honour then starts up claiming to be dealt with in turn; for having courage restored to her, she must have the courage to break with honour, she must dare to be faithless, and not merely say, I will be brave, but be brave enough to be dishonourable. The cage of a plighted woman hungering for her disengagement has two keepers, a noble and a vile; where on earth is creature so dreadfully enclosed? It lies with her to overcome what degrades her, that she may win to liberty by overcoming what exalts.

Contemplating her situation, this idea (or vapour of youth taking the godlike semblance of an idea) sprang, born of her present sickness, in Clara's mind; that it must be an ill-constructed tumbling world where the hour of ignorance is made the creator of our destiny by being forced to the decisive elections upon which life's main issues hang. Her teacher had brought her to contemplate his view of the world.

She thought likewise: how must a man despise women, who can expose himself as he does to me!

Miss Middleton owed it to Sir Willoughby Patterne that she ceased to think like a girl. When had the great change begun? Glancing back, she could imagine that it was near the period we call, in love, the first—almost from the first. And she was led to imagine it through having become barred from imagining her own emotions of that season. They were so dead as not to arise even under the form of shadows in fancy. Without imputing blame to him, for she was reasonable so far, she deemed herself a person entrapped. In a dream somehow she had committed herself to a life-long imprisonment; and, oh terror! not in a quiet dungeon; the barren walls closed round her, talked, called for ardour, expected admiration.

She was unable to say why she could not give it; why she retreated more and more inwardly; why she invoked the frost to kill her tenderest feelings. She was in revolt, until a whisper of the day of bells reduced her to blank submission; out of which a breath of peace drew her to revolt again in gradual rapid stages, and once more the aspect of that singular day of merry blackness felled her to earth. It was alive, it advanced, it had a mouth, it had a song. She received letters of bridesmaids writing of it, and felt them as waves that hurl a log of wreck to shore. Following which afflicting sense of antagonism to the whole circle sweeping on with her, she considered the possibility of her being in a commencement of madness. Otherwise might she not be accused of a capriciousness quite as deplorable to consider? She

had written to certain of those young ladies not very long since of this gentleman—how?—in what tone? And was it her madness then?—her recovery now? It seemed to her that to have written of him enthusiastically resembled madness more than to shudder away from the union, but standing alone, opposing all she has consented to set in motion, is too strange to a girl for perfect justification to be found in reason when she seeks it.

Sir Willoughby was destined himself to supply her with that key of special insight which revealed and stamped him in a title to fortify her spirit of revolt, consecrate it almost.

The popular physician of the county and famous anecdotal wit, Dr. Corney, had been a guest at dinner overnight, and the next day there was talk of him, and of the resources of his art displayed by Armand Dehors on his hearing that he was to minister to the tastes of a gathering of hommes d'esprit. Sir Willoughby glanced at Dehors with his customary benevolent irony in speaking of the persons, great in their way, who served him "Why he cannot give us daily so good a dinner, one must, I suppose, go to French nature to learn. The French are in the habit of making up for all their deficiencies with enthusiasm. They have no reverence; if I had said to him, 'I want something particularly excellent, Dehors,' I should have had a commonplace dinner. But they have enthusiasm on draught, and that is what we must pull at. Know one Frenchman and you know France. I have had Dehors under my eye two years, and I can mount his enthusiasm at a word. He took hommes d'esprit to denote men of letters Frenchmen have destroyed their nobility, so, for the sake of excitement, they put up the literary man—not to worship him; that they can't do, it's to put themselves in a state of effervescence. They will not have real greatness above them, so they have sham. That they may justly call it equality, perhaps! Ay, for all *your shake of the head, my good Vernon! You see, human nature comes* round again, try as we may to upset it, and the French only differ from us in wading through blood to discover that they are at their old trick once more: 'I am your equal, sir, your born equal Oh! you are a man of letters? Allow me to be in a bubble about you.' Yes, Vernon, and I believe the fellow looks up to you as the head of the establishment. I am not jealous. Provided he attends to his functions! There's a French philosopher who's for naming the days of the year after the birthdays of French men of letters, Voltaire-day, Rousseau-day, Racine-day, so on. Perhaps Vernon will inform us who takes April 1st."

"A few trifling errors are of no consequence when you are in the vein of satire," said Vernon. "Be satisfied with knowing a nation in the person of a cook."

"They may be reading us English off in a jockey!" said Dr. Middleton. "I believe that jockeys are the exchange we make for cooks, and our neighbours do not get the best of the bargain."

"No, but, my dear good Vernon, it's nonsensical," said Sir Willoughby; "why be bawling every day the name of men of letters?"

"Philosophers."

"Well, philosophers."

"Of all countries and times. And they are the benefactors of humanity."

"Bene . . . !" Sir Willoughby's derisive laugh broke the word. "There's a pretension in all that, irreconcilable with English sound sense. Surely you see it?"

"We might," said Vernon, "if you like, give alternative titles to the days, or have alternating days, devoted to our great families that performed meritorious deeds upon such a day."

The rebel Clara, delighting in his banter, was heard: "Can we furnish sufficient?"

"A poet or two could help us."

"Perhaps a statesman," she suggested.

"A pugilist, if wanted."

"For blowy days," observed Dr. Middleton, and hastily in penitence picked up the conversation he had unintentionally prostrated, with a general remark on new-fangled notions, and a word aside to Vernon; which created the blissful suspicion in Clara, that her father was indisposed to second Sir Willoughby's opinions even when sharing them.

Sir Willoughby had led the conversation Displeased that the lead should be withdrawn from him, he turned to Clara and related one of the after-dinner anecdotes of Dr. Corney; and another, with a vast deal of human nature in it, concerning a valetudinarian gentleman, whose wife chanced to be desperately ill, and he went to the physicians assembled in consultation outside the sick-room, imploring them by all he valued, and in tears, to save the poor patient for him, saying: "She is everything to me, everything, and if she dies I am compelled to run the risks of marrying again; I must marry again, for she has accustomed me so to the little attentions of a wife, that in truth I can't, I can't lose her! She must be saved!" And the loving husband of any devoted wife wrung his hands.

"Now, there, Clara, there you have the Egoist," added Sir Willoughby. "That is the perfect Egoist. You see what he comes to—and his wife! The man was utterly unconscious of giving vent to the grossest selfishness."

"An Egoist!" said Clara.

"Beware of marrying an Egoist, my dear!" He bowed gallantly, and so blindly fatuous did he appear to her, that she could hardly believe him guilty

of uttering the words she had heard from him, and kept her eyes on him vacantly till she came to a sudden full stop in the thoughts directing her gaze. She looked at Vernon, she looked at her father, and at the ladies Eleanor and Isabel None of them saw the man in the word, none noticed the word; yet this word was her medical herb, her illuminating lamp, the key of him (and, alas, but she thought it by feeling her need of one), the advocate pleading in apology for her. Egoist! She beheld him—unfortunate, self-designated man that he was!—in his good qualities as well as bad under the implacable lamp, and his good were drenched in his first person singular His generosity roared of *I* louder than the rest. Conceive him at the age of Dr. Corney's hero: "Pray, save my wife for me. I shall positively have to get another if I lose her, and one who may not love me half so well, or understand the peculiarities of my character and appreciate my attitudes" He was in his thirty-second year, therefore a young man, strong and healthy, yet his garrulous return to his principal theme, his emphasis on I and me, lent him the seeming of an old man spotted with decaying youth.

"Beware of marrying an Egoist."

Would he help her to escape? The idea of the scene ensuing upon her petition for release, and the being dragged round the walls of his egoism, and having her head knocked against the corners, alarmed her with sensations of sickness.

A PHILISTINE ARISTOPHANES



W. S. GILBERT is a living proof that even the Philistine may reach a place on Parnassus. We should not be misled by a harlequin costume and the most infectiously comic clowning since Aristophanes; Gilbert is a japer almost frighteningly obtuse in his inability to perceive or even believe in any form of beauty or goodness. All his powers of wit—and they are acute—all his powers of insight—and they are penetrating—are devoted to detecting and exposing humbug. He seizes upon it everywhere, but he sees nothing else anywhere. He can believe that the police in The Pirates of Penzance *are trembling in their boots; he cannot believe in bravery. He can believe that the Lord Chancellor in* Iolanthe *and Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., in* Pinafore *reached their high stations through wirepulling and mediocrity; he cannot believe in ability. He can believe in sexual infatuation; he cannot believe in love. He can believe in poets talking about beauty; he cannot believe in their meaning it.*

Now, these limitations in Gilbert are usually hidden by his air of hearty good humor and his glittering cascades of wit. They are softened, too, by the exquisite humorous delicacy of Sullivan's music, with its hues of a more warmly affectionate laughter coloring our response to Gilbert's incisive surgery. Notice how Yum-Yum, in The Mikado, *beneath all her pretty airs and graces, is really nothing but a heartless coquette, filled with the consciousness of her own charms, concerned for nothing but her own gratification, and hardly enough troubled by Nanki-Poo's approaching fate to make more than the lightest protest of regret. Notice the way in which General Stanley's daughters are quite indifferent to Frederic's appeals until he suggests that he may find pity in one "whose homely face and bad complexion" have made her despair "of ever winning man's affection."*

Notice Gilbert's scorn of a man so lost to grace as to turn from buying stocks to painting a picture or writing a poem.

Further, there is brutality in Gilbert. Hardly one of his operettas does not hold old maids up to contempt for being old, unlovely, unmarried, and still desirous of a husband. Katisha in The Mikado, Ruth in The Pirates of Penzance, the Fairy Queen in Iolanthe, Lady Jane in Patience: all are pelted with cruel derision. And the young in Gilbert's world are no better than their elders. They are foolish, shallow, thoughtless, vain, and self-centered, with only the eagerness and animal prettiness of young creatures to commend them. The single one who shows a trace of loyalty to anything but himself, Frederic, "the slave of duty," is a fool and a dupe. Whenever any character in Gilbert talks of truth, beauty, love, or any ideal, he is always either self-deceived or a deliberate hypocrite pursuing some secret advantage.

Gilbert is thus forever throwing out the baby with the dirty bath water. And this is more than a recklessness born of wit and high spirits, it is, as we have seen, an all-inclusive cynicism whose sneer is drowned in a guffaw. Nevertheless, there is a tonic exhilaration in him, and service to virtue too. Though Gilbert cares nothing for virtue and hardly seems to grant its existence, he has a hatred of pretense, a rough loyalty to fact. He will show us nothing to admire, but much that deserves his belaboring. If life is not all selfishness, as Gilbert suggests, there is enough selfishness in it, disguised in just such plausible masks as Gilbert strips off, to point his insight. If love is not all egoism, as he tells us, neither, he makes us realize, is it all pure devotion. If the world is not exclusively populated by prosers, fools, windbags, and cheats, they are strewn thick enough so that his shots bowl them down on all sides.

Vital elements in Gilbert's effectiveness are the fantastically adroit rhymes and metrical ingenuities of which he was a master. They do much to create that atmosphere of mauling good humor that hides the scorn and cruelty. But Gilbert's greatest strength is the truth in the heart of his distortions. The Pre-Raphaelites, for example, were not pure artistic poseurs like Bunthorne: there were truth and beauty in Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and the rest, even the fin-de-siècle aestheticism of Wilde had its own curious sincerity. These virtues, as usual, were invisible to Gilbert. But he did see, and saw truly, the sham that surrounded them, and his attack was annihilating. The lovesick maidens with their medieval draperies and their admiration for "grey velvet with a tender bloom like cold gravy" are the

eternal dupes of aesthetic fashion, as Bunthorne with his poetic agonies and his weird verbal writhings is the eternal artistic charlatan. Gilbert transfixes them, as he does many another deception, once and for all. He renders sham aestheticism as ridiculous as Molière did preciosity and irrelevant learning. We may forgive him, after such services, if he failed to understand that beauty and goodness may also be real.

PATIENCE

««« Patience was first produced in 1881. This scene is the opening of the play »»»

The Love-Sick Maidens and the Mystic Bard

Exterior of Castle Bunthorne. Entrance to castle by drawbridge over moat. Young ladies dressed in aesthetic draperies are grouped about the stage They play on lutes, mandolins, etc., as they sing, and all are in the last stages of despair. Angela, Ella, and Saphir lead them

CHORUS.

Twenty love-sick maidens we,
Love-sick all against our will.
Twenty years hence we shall be
Twenty love-sick maidens still.
Twenty love-sick maidens we,
And we die for love of thee.

SOLO—ANGELA. Love feeds on hope, they say, or love will die—
ALL. Ah, miserie!
Yet my love lives, although no hope have I!
ALL. Ah, miserie!
Alas, poor heart, go hide thyself away—
To weeping concords tune thy roundelay!
Ah, miserie!

CHORUS.

All our love is all for one,
Yet that love he heedeth not,
He is coy and cares for none,
Sad and sorry is our lot!
Ah, miserie!

SOLO—ELLA.

Go, breaking heart,
Go, dream of love requited;
Go, foolish heart,
Go, dream of lovers plighted;
Go, madcap heart,
Go, dream of never waking;
And in thy dream
Forget that thou art breaking!

CHORUS. Ah, miserie!

ELLA. Forget that thou art breaking!

CHORUS. Twenty love-sick maidens, etc.

ANGELA. There is a strange magic in this love of ours! Rivals as we all are in the affections of our Reginald, the very hopelessness of our love is a bond that binds us to one another!

SAPHIR. Jealousy is merged in misery. While he, the very cynosure of our eyes and hearts, remains icy insensible—what have we to strive for?

ELLA. The love of maidens is, to him, as interesting as the taxes!

SAPHIR. Would that it were! He pays his taxes.

ANGELA. And cherishes the receipts!

Enter Lady Jane

SAPHIR. Happy receipts!

JANE. (*suddenly*) Fools!

ANGELA. I beg your pardon.

JANE. Fools and blind! The man loves—wildly loves!

ANGELA. But whom? None of us!

JANE. No, none of us. His weird fancy has lighted, for the nonce, on Patience, the village milkmaid!

SAPHIR. On Patience? Oh, it cannot be!

JANE. Bah! But yesterday I caught him in her dairy, eating fresh butter with a tablespoon. Today he is not well!

SAPHIR. But Patience boasts that she has never loved—that love is, to her, a sealed book! Oh, he cannot be serious!

JANE. 'Tis but a fleeting fancy—'twill quickly pass away. (*Aside*) Oh, Reginald, if you but knew what a wealth of golden love is waiting for you, stored up in this rugged old bosom of mine, the milkmaid's triumph would be short indeed!

Patience appears on an eminence
She looks down with pity on the despondent Ladies

RECIT.—PATIENCE. Still brooding on their mad infatuation!
I thank thee, Love, thou comest not to me!
Far happier I, free from thy ministration,
Than dukes or duchesses who love can be!

SAPHIR. (*looking up*) 'Tis Patience—happy girl! Loved by a Poet!

PATIENCE. Your pardon, ladies. I intrude upon you. *Going*

ANGELA. Nay, pretty child, come hither. Is it true
That you have never loved?

PATIENCE. Most true indeed.

SOPRANOS. Most marvelous!

CONTRALTOS. And most deplorable!

SONG—PATIENCE. I cannot tell what this love may be
That cometh to all, but not to me.
It cannot be kind, as they'd imply,
Or why do these ladies sigh?
It cannot be joy and rapture deep,
Or why do these gentle ladies weep?
It cannot be blissful as 'tis said,
Or why are their eyes so wondrous red?

Though everywhere true love I see
A-coming to all, but not to me,
I cannot tell what this love may be!
For I am blithe and I am gay,
While they sit sighing night and day.
Think of the gulf 'twixt them and me,
"Fal la la la!"—and "Miserie!"

CHORUS. Yes, she is blithe, etc.

PATIENCE. If love is a thorn, they show no wit
Who foolishly hug and foster it.
If love is a weed, how simple they
Who gather it, day by day!
If love is a nettle that makes you smart,
Then why do you wear it next your heart?
And if it be none of these, say I,
Ah, why do you sit and sob and sigh?

Though everywhere, etc.

CHORUS. Yes, she is blithe, etc.

ANGELA. Ah, Patience, if you have never loved, you have never known true happiness! *All sigh* .

PATIENCE But the truly happy always seem to have so much on their minds. The truly happy never seem quite well.

JANE. There is a transcendality of delirium—an acute accentuation of supremest ecstasy—which the earthy might easily mistake for indigestion. But it is *not* indigestion—it is aesthetic transfiguration! (*To the others*) Enough of babble. Come!

[*After a scene introducing the Dragoons, with Colonel Calverley and Major Murgatroyd, Bunthorne enters, followed by Ladies, two and two,*

singing and playing on harps as before. He is composing a poem, and quite absorbed. He sees no one, but appears in all the agonies of composition The Ladies watch him intently as he writhes. At last he hits on the word he wants and writes it down. A general sense of relief.]

BUNTHORNE. Finished! At last! Finished!

He staggers, overcome with the mental strain, into arms of Colonel Calverley

COLONEL. Are you better now?

BUNTHORNE. Yes—oh, it's you—I am better now. The poem is finished, and my soul has gone into it. That was all. It was nothing worth mentioning, it occurs three times a day. (*Sees Patience, who has entered during this scene.*) Ah, Patience! Dear Patience!

Holds her hand; she seems frightened

ANGELA. Will it please you read it to us, sir?

SAPHIR. This we supplicate. *All kneel*

BUNTHORNE. Shall I?

ALL THE DRAGOONS. No!

BUNTHORNE (*annoyed—to Patience*). I will read it if *you* bid me!

PATIENCE (*much frightened*). You can if you like!

BUNTHORNE. It is a wild, weird, fleshly thing; yet very tender, very yearning, very precious. It is called, "Oh, Hollow! Hollow! Hollow!"

PATIENCE. Is it a hunting song?

BUNTHORNE. A hunting song? No, it is *not* a hunting song. It is the wail of the poet's heart on discovering that everything is commonplace. To understand it, cling passionately to one another, and think of faint lilies.

They do so as he recites

"OH, HOLLOW! HOLLOW! HOLLOW!"

What time the poet hath hymned
The writhing maid lithe-limbed,
  Quivering on amaranthine asphodel,
How can he paint her woes,
Knowing, as well he knows,
  That all can be set right with calomel?

When from the poet's plinth
The amorous colocynth
  Yearns for the aloe, faint with rapturous thrills,
How can he hymn their throes
Knowing, as well he knows,
  That they are only uncompounded pills?

Is it, and can it be,
Nature hath this decree,
  Nothing poetic in the world shall dwell?
Or that in all her works
Something poetic lurks,
  Even in colocynth and calomel?
    I cannot tell. *Exit Bunthorne*

ANGELA. How purely fragrant!

SAPHIR. How earnestly precious!

PATIENCE. Well, it seems to me to be nonsense.

SAPHIR. Nonsense, yes, perhaps—but oh, what precious nonsense!

COLONEL. This is all very well, but you seem to forget that you are engaged to us.

SAPHIR. It can never be. You are not Empyrean. You are not Della Cruscan You are not even early English. Oh, be early English, ere it is too late!

Officers look at each other in astonishment

JANE (*looking at uniform*). Red and yellow! Primary colors! Oh, South Kensington!

DUKE. We didn't design our uniforms, but we don't see how they could be improved.

JANE. No, you wouldn't. Still, there *is* a cobwebby grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese—it matters not what—would at least be early English! Come, maidens.

Exeunt Maidens, two and two, singing refrain of "Twenty love-sick maidens we." The Dragoons follow them off angrily Enter Bunthorne, who changes his manner and becomes intensely melodramatic.

RECIT. AND SONG—BUNTHORNE.

Am I alone
  And unobserved? I am!
Then let me own
  I'm an aesthetic sham!
This air severe
  Is but a mere
    Veneer!
This cynic smile
  Is but a wile
    Of guile!

This costume chaste
Is but good taste
Misplaced!
Let me confess!
A languid love for lilies does *not* blight me!
Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do *not* delight me!
I do *not* care for dirty greens
By any means.
I do *not* long for all one sees
That's Japanese.
I am *not* fond of uttering platitudes
In stained-glass attitudes.
In short, my medievalism's affectation,
Born of a morbid love of admiration.

SONG. If you're anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line as a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental terms, and plant them everywhere.
You must lie upon the daisies and discourse in novel phrases of your complicated frame of mind,
The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental kind.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for *me*,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man must be!"

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old days which have long since passed away,
And convince 'em, if you can, that the reign of good Queen Anne, was Culture's palmiest day.
Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and new, and declare it's crude and mean,
For Art stopped short in the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If that's not good enough for him which is good enough for *me*,
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of youth must be!"

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean!
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your medieval hand.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly not suit *me*,
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!"

MARK TWAIN: THE BOY AND THE SATIRIST



THERE ARE *two Mark Twains. One is the harum-scarum boy who lives in the world of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn: full of high spirits and wild practical jokes, irreverently guying the adult world for the pretensions he sees through with his keen boyish eyes—and sometimes mistaking for pretension great and noble things beyond his grasp. It was the boy in Mark Twain who half shared Tom's thoughtlessly cruel joke of letting Aunt Polly believe him drowned and turning up for his own funeral. It was the boy who could grow weak with laughter at getting Aunt Sally so mixed up counting pewter spoons that at last "she grabbed up the basket and slammed it across the house and knocked the cat galley-west"; the boy who delighted in the crude horseplay of loading the Jumping Frog so full of buckshot that he couldn't heave himself off the ground. And it was the boy who not merely derided the sham soulfulness and pious buncombe of the Innocents Abroad pretending to admire paintings that really bewildered them, but assumed that the masterpieces of architecture and art were as fraudulent as the enthusiasm they evoked.*

Concealed behind and speaking through the glorious tomfooleries of this

youngster is the other Mark Twain: the disillusioned observer of human behavior whose gaze became ever deeper and sharper with the advancing years until the piercing hawk's-eyes grew bitter over the chicaneries and cruelties of what he came to call "the damned mangy human race." "'Be weak, be water, be characterless, be cheaply persuadable,'" he said, "was God's first command to a human being, and the only one he would never be able to disobey." And this angry evaluation of humanity turns up again and again in his books. Huck Finn reports Colonel Sherburn scornfully taunting the mob that has torn down his fence: "The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a man! Because you're brave enough to tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come along here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands on a man?" The Connecticut Yankee pictures humanity's merciless and cringing snobbery. "Toward the shaven monk . . . with his cowl tilted back and the sweat washing his fat jowls, the coal-burner was deeply reverent; to the gentleman he was abject, with the small farmer and free mechanic he was cordial and gossipy, and when a slave passed by with a countenance respectfully lowered, this chap's nose was in the air—he coudn't even see him. Well, there are times when one would like to hang the whole human race and finish the farce." The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg flays human mendacity and avarice with a laughter that stings like whips of fire; The Mysterious Stranger is a posthumous blast at all the meannesses, hypocrisies, treacheries, cowardice, and brutality that stain our nature.

But Mark Twain constantly dissolved these bitter perceptions in a flow of humor. Partly this was a matter of caution and policy, he was always afraid he might evoke an angry ostracism if he were too outspoken. But partly, too, it was because animal gusto and the comic spirit so welled up in him that indignation was forever being exploded by a jibe. In his character he mingled the essences of Tolstoy the angry moralist and Timon the misanthrope with the inexhaustible hilarity of Falstaff and Charles Dickens. And so his work is full of burlesque and fantastic hyperbole and gorgeous absurdity, no less full of soft-spoken and demolishing irony, of playing the vacant idiot even as he holds his voice modulated and sweet with rage Disguised as a professional funny man, the satirist in Mark Twain is able to pass off his most withering fire as no more than a comic rampage.

He has other protective devices as well. Many of his most searing attacks pretend to be concerned with the historical past: with medieval Austria,

with sixteenth-century England, with the legendary days of Malory's Morte d'Arthur. *But the hell-on-earth of hatred, superstition, ferocity, and persecution painted in* The Mysterious Stranger *is no more medieval than Hitler's Germany; little Tom Canty, in* The Prince and the Pauper, *might equally well be a child in a nineteenth-century industrial slum;* A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court *is written, as John Macy says, "not about a mythical England of the dark ages, but about us." Under a diplomatic exterior Mark Twain hated the lords of the earth, whether they were called kings or industrialists. He knew that the robber barons did not change their spots when they became Fuhrers or financiers.*

The satire of the Connecticut Yankee *shows itself in many ways as double-edged. It is not merely artisans of the dark ages who could be muddled about economics to the extent of mistaking big incomes and bigger prices for prosperity. When "The Boss" takes advantage of the simplicity of Arthur's knights by clapping derby hats on over their helmets and getting them to wear placards like sandwich men, we are less struck by the absurd spectacle they present than we are by his vulgarity and the shameless treacheries of unscrupulous advertising that his trick symbolizes. In the end, the Yankee, the shrewd man of facts, the vendor of wooden nutmegs, the practical incarnation of common sense, is reluctantly impressed by the chivalrous idealism he began by deriding. Mark Twain has fun with a few harmless medieval absurdities, like Sir Dinadan, the court bore, but everything he really attacks is as alive and dangerous as it was in Arthur's time. He burlesques King Arthur's court, but it is the Yankee's smart world of grab and exploitation that he satirizes.*

All the Yankee's self-satire, of course, is unconscious. Mark Twain's favorite device, however, for achieving satiric innocence is to give a boy's eye view of the grown-up world: a realistic variant of Carroll's childhood fantasy. Carroll disguises his criticism as symbolic dream; Twain merely lets the psychological distance between childhood and manhood do its own work. His two greatest books, Tom Sawyer *and* Huckleberry Finn, *are both presented from the boy's point of view. Everyone remembers the famous whitewashing episode, in which Tom discovers a psychological principle not limited to boys. Less quoted, but hardly less revealing, is the "showing-off" scene in Sunday School, with the young lady teachers, the young gentlemen teachers, the superintendent, the little boys, and the little girls all becoming busy and self-important before Judge Thatcher*

"And above it all the great man sat and beamed a majestic judicial smile . . . for he was 'showing off' too"

Huckleberry Finn *is an extended panorama of adult doings as seen by a boy. How vividly Huck shows up the tragic distortion of values and the waste of excellent qualities in the Shepherdson-Grangerford feud, without saying a word that a boy might not have spoken, by sheer ignorant questioning and boyish wonder! How significant is Huck's reflection on Tom's scheme to help the Negro Jim escape "Tom Sawyer was in earnest, and was actually going to help steal that nigger out of slavery. That was the thing that was too many for me. Here was a boy that was respectable and well brung up . . . and yet here he was, without any more pride or rightness of feeling than to stoop to this business and make himself a shame before everybody."*

Those two precious scoundrels, the Dauphin and the Duke of Bilgewater, are more than a couple of portraits of small-time rascality They are touchstones for the other human beings with whom they come in contact: the Negro Jim's simple-minded goodness, Huck's boyish helplessness to cope with an adult fake that he sees through very well, the different types of gullibility and suspiciousness they evoke in the endeavor to pass as Peter Wilks's brothers The theatrical hoax of "The Royal Nonesuch" is almost climactic in its deflation of human nature. Stepping back from his come-on line at the bottom of the poster, the Duke says, "If that line don't fetch 'em, I don't know Arkansaw!" But it was more than Arkansas that was packed into the courthouse the third night. It was the whole world.

HUCKLEBERRY FINN

**** Huckleberry Finn* was published in 1884. The extracts given here are from Chapter 16 and from Chapters 22 and 23. Both occur during the long journey in which Huck and Jim drift down the Mississippi on the raft ***

Huck's Conscience Worries Him About Helping Free a Slave

JIM SAID it made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to freedom. Well, I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he *was* most free—and who was to blame for it? Why, *me*. I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way. It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest; I couldn't stay still in one place. It hadn't ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did, and it stayed with me, and scorched me more and more. I tried to make out to myself that *I* warn't to blame, because *I* didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn't no use, conscience up and says, every time, "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could 'a' paddled ashore and told somebody." That was so—I couldn't get around that no way. That was where it pinched. Conscience says to me, "What had poor Miss Watson done to you that you could see her nigger go off right under your eyes and never say one single word? What did that poor old woman do to you that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you your manners, she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. *That's* what she done."

I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead. I fidgeted up and down the raft, abusing myself to myself, and Jim was fidgeting up and down past me. We neither of us could keep still. Every time he danced around and says, "Dah's Cairo!" it went through me like a shot, and I thought if it *was* Cairo I reckoned I would die of miserableness.

Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children,

and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Ab'litionist to go and steal them.

It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn't ever dared to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was according to the old saying, "Give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell." Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this nigger, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm.

I was sorry to hear Jim say that, it was such a lowering of him. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, "Let up on me—it ain't too late yet—I'll paddle ashore at the first light and tell." I felt easy and happy and light as a feather right off. All my troubles was gone. I went to looking out sharp for a light, and sort of singing to myself. By and by one showed. Jim sings out:

"We's safe, Huck, we's safe! Jump up and crack yo' heels! Dat's de good ole Cairo at las', I jis knows it!"

I says:

"I'll take the canoe and go and see, Jim. It mightn't be, you know."

He jumped and got the canoe ready, and put his old coat in the bottom for me to set on, and give me the paddle, and as I shoved off, he says:

"Pooty soon I'll be a-shout'n' for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck, I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn' ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck, you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had, en you's de *only* fren' ole Jim's got now."

I was paddling off, all in a sweat to tell on him, but when he says this, it seemed to kind of take the tuck all out of me. I went along slow then, and I warn't right down certain whether I was glad I started or whether I warn't. When I was fifty yards off, Jim says:

"Dah you goes, de ole true Huck, de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim."

Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I *got* to do it—I can't get *out* of it. Right then along comes a skiff with two men in it with guns, and they stopped and I stopped. One of them says:

"What's that yonder?"

"A piece of a raft," I says.

"Well, there's five niggers run off to-night up yonder, above the head of the bend. Is your man white or black?"

I didn't answer up prompt. I tried to, but the words wouldn't come. I tried for a second or two to brace up and out with it, but I warn't man enough—hadn't the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening; so I just give up trying, and up and says:

"He's white."

"I reckon we'll go and see for ourselves."

"I wish you would," says I, "because it's pap that's there, and maybe you'd help me tow the raft ashore where the light is. He's sick—and so is mam and Mary Ann."

"Oh, the devil! we're in a hurry, boy. But I s'pose we've got to. Come, buckle to your paddle, and let's get along."

I buckled to my paddle and they laid to their oars. When we had made a stroke or two, I says:

"Pap'll be mighty much obleeged to you, I can tell you. Everybody goes away when I want them to help me tow the raft ashore, and I can't do it by myself."

"Well, that's infernal mean. Odd, too. Say, boy, what's the matter with your father?"

"It's the—a—the—well, it ain't anything much."

They stopped pulling. It warn't but a mighty little ways to the raft now. One says:

"Boy, that's a lie. What *is* the matter with your pap? Answer up square now, and it'll be the better for you."

"I will, sir, I will, honest—but don't leave us, please. It's the—the— Gentlemen, if you'll only pull ahead, and let me heave you the headline, you won't have to come a-near the raft—please do."

"Set her back, John, set her back!" says one. They backed water. "Keep away, boy—keep to looard. Confound it, I just expect the wind has blowed it to us. Your pap's got the smallpox, and you know it precious well. Why didn't you come out and say so? Do you want to spread it all over?"

"Well," says I, a-blubbering, "I've told everybody before, and they just went away and left us."

"Poor devil, there's something in that. We are right down sorry for you, but we—well, hang it, we don't want the smallpox, you see. Look here, I'll tell you what to do. Don't you try to land by yourself, or you'll smash everything to pieces. You float along down about twenty miles, and you'll come to a town on the left-hand side of the river. It will be long after sun-up then, and when you ask for help you tell them your folks are all down with chills and fever. Don't be a fool again, and let people guess what is the

matter. Now we're trying to do you a kindness; so you just put twenty miles between us, that's a good boy. It wouldn't do any good to land yonder where the light is—it's only a wood-yard. Say, I reckon your father's poor, and I'm bound to say he's in pretty hard luck. Here, I'll put a twenty-dollar gold piece on this board, and you get it when it floats by. I feel mighty mean to leave you, but my kingdom! it won't do to fool with smallpox, don't you see?"

"Hold on, Parker," says the man, "here's a twenty to put on the board for me. Good-by, boy; you do as Mr. Parker told you, and you'll be all right."

"That's so, my boy—good-by, good-by. If you see any runaway niggers you get help and nab them, and you can make some money by it."

"Good-by, sir," says I; "I won't let no runaway niggers get by me if I can help it."

They went off and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right, a body that don't *get started* right when he's little ain't got no show—when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on; s'pose you'd 'a' done right and give Jim up, would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad—I'd feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I, what's the use you learning to do right when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time.

The King and the Duke Play Arkansas

The first chance we got the duke he had some show-bills printed, and after that, for two or three days as we floated along, the raft was a most uncommon lively place, for there warn't nothing but sword-fighting and rehearsing—as the duke called it—going on all the time. One morning, when we was pretty well down the state of Arkansaw, we come in sight of a little one-horse town in a big bend; so we tied up about three-quarters of a mile above it, in the mouth of a crick which was shut in like a tunnel by the cypress trees, and all of us but Jim took the canoe and went down there to see if there was any chance in that place for our show.

We struck it mighty lucky; there was going to be a circus there that afternoon, and the country-people was already beginning to come in, in

all kinds of old shackly wagons, and on horses. The circus would leave before night, so our show would have a pretty good chance. The duke he hired the court-house, and we went around and stuck up our bills. They read like this:

Shaksperean Revival ! ! !
Wonderful Attraction!
For One Night Only!

The world renowned tragedians,
DAVID GARRICK THE YOUNGER, of Drury Lane Theatre, London,
and
EDMUND KEAN THE ELDER, of the Royal Haymarket Theatre,
Whitechapel, Pudding Lane, Piccadilly, London, and the
Royal Continental Theatres, in their sublime
Shaksperean Spectacle entitled
The Balcony Scene
in

ROMEO AND JULIET ! ! !
Romeo .... *Mr. Garrick*
Juliet .... *Mr. Kean*

Assisted by the whole strength of the company!
New costumes, new scenery, new appointments!
Also:
The thrilling, masterly, and blood-curdling
Broad-sword conflict

In RICHARD III. ! ! !
Richard III .... *Mr. Garrick*
Richmond .... *Mr. Kean*

Also: (by special request)
HAMLET'S IMMORTAL SOLILOQUY ! !

By the Illustrious Kean!
Done by him 300 consecutive nights in Paris!

For One Night Only,
On account of imperative European engagements!

Admission 25 cents; children and servants, 10 cents.

Then we went loafing around town The stores and houses was most all old, shackly, dried-up frame concerns that hadn't ever been painted, they was set up three or four foot above ground on stilts, so as to be out of reach of the water when the river was overflowed. The houses had little gardens around them, but they didn't seem to raise hardly anything in them but jimpson-weeds, and sunflowers, and ash-piles, and old curled-up boots and shoes, and pieces of bottles, and rags, and played-out tinware. The fences was made of different kinds of boards, nailed on at different times, and they leaned every which way, and had gates that didn't generly have but one hinge—a leather one. Some of the fences had been whitewashed some time or another, but the duke said it was in Columbus's time, like enough. There was generly hogs in the garden, and people driving them out. . . .

Well, that night we had *our* show; but there warn't only about twelve people there—just enough to pay expenses. And they laughed all the time, and that made the duke mad, and everybody left, anyway, before the show was over, but one boy which was asleep. So the duke said these Arkansaw lunkheads couldn't come up to Shakespeare; what they wanted was low comedy—and maybe something ruther worse than low comedy, he reckoned. He said he could size their style. So next morning he got some big sheets of wrapping-paper and some black paint, and drawed off some handbills, and stuck them up all over the village. The bills said:

AT THE COURT HOUSE!
For 3 Nights Only!

The World-Renowned Tragedians
DAVID GARRICK THE YOUNGER!
and
EDMUND KEAN THE ELDER!
Of the London and Continental Theatres,

In their Thrilling Tragedy of

THE KING'S CAMELEOPARD,
or
THE ROYAL NONESUCH! ! !

Admission 50 cents.

Then at the bottom was the biggest line of all, which said:

LADIES AND CHILDREN NOT ADMITTED

"There," says he, "if that line don't fetch them, I don't know Arkansaw!"

Well, all day him and the king was hard at it, rigging up a stage and a curtain and a row of candles for footlights; and that night the house was jam full of men in no time. When the place couldn't hold no more, the duke he quit tending door and went around the back way and come onto the stage and stood up before the curtain and made a little speech, and praised up this tragedy, and said it was the most thrillingest one that ever was, and so he went on a-bragging about the tragedy, and about Edmund Kean the Elder, which was to play the main principal part in it; and at last when he'd got everybody's expectations up high enough, he rolled up the curtain, and the next minute the king come a-prancing out on all fours, naked; and he was painted all over, ring-streaked-and-striped, all sorts of colors, as splendid as a rainbow. And—but never mind the rest of his outfit; it was just wild, but it was awful funny. The people most killed themselves laughing; and when the king got done capering and capered off behind the scenes, they roared and clapped and stormed and haw-hawed till he come back and done it over again, and after that they made him do it another time. Well, it would make a cow laugh to see the shines that old idiot cut.

Then the duke he lets the curtain down, and bows to the people, and says the great tragedy will be performed only two nights more, on accounts of pressing London engagements, where the seats is all sold already for it in Drury Lane; and then he makes them another bow, and says if he has succeeded in pleasing them and instructing them, he will be deeply obleeged if they will mention it to their friends and get them to come and see it.

Twenty people sings out:

"What, is it over? Is that *all?*"

The duke says yes. Then there was a fine time. Everybody sings out, "Sold!" and rose up mad, and was a-going for that stage and them tragedians. But a big, fine-looking man jumps up on a bench and shouts:

"Hold on! Just a word, gentlemen." They stopped to listen. "We are sold—mighty badly sold. But we don't want to be the laughing-stock of this whole town, I reckon, and never hear the last of this thing as long as we live. *No.* What we want is to go out of here quiet, and talk this show up, and sell the *rest* of the town! Then we'll all be in the same boat. Ain't that sensible?" ("You bet it is!—the jedge is right!" everybody sings out.) "All right, then—not a word about any sell. Go along home, and advise everybody to come and see the tragedy."

Next day you couldn't hear nothing around that town but how splendid that show was. House was jammed again that night, and we sold this crowd the same way. When me and the king and the duke got home to the raft

we all had a supper; and by and by, about midnight, they made Jim and me back her out and float her down the middle of the river, and fetch her in and hide her about two mile below town.

The third night the house was crammed again—and they warn't new-comers this time, but people that was at the show the other two nights. I stood by the duke at the door, and I see that every man that went in had his pockets bulging, or something muffled up under his coat—and I see it warn't no perfumery, neither, not by a long sight. I smelt sickly eggs by the barrel, and rotten cabbages, and such things; and if I know the signs of a dead cat being around, and I bet I do, there was sixty-four of them went in. I shoved in there for a minute, but it was too various for me, I couldn't stand it. Well, when the place couldn't hold no more people the duke he give a fellow a quarter and told him to tend door for him a minute, and then he started around for the stage door, I after him; but the minute we turned the corner and was in the dark he says:

"Walk fast now till you get away from the houses, and then shin for the raft like the dickens was after you!"

I done it, and he done the same. We struck the raft at the same time, and in less than two seconds we was gliding downstream, all dark and still, and edging towards the middle of the river, nobody saying a word. I reckoned the poor king was in for a gaudy time of it with the audience, but nothing of the sort, pretty soon he crawls out from under the wigwam, and says:

"Well, how'd the old thing pan out this time, duke?" He hadn't been up-town at all.

We never showed a light till we was about ten mile below the village. Then we lit up and had a supper, and the king and the duke fairly laughed their bones loose over the way they'd served them people. The duke says.

"Greenhorns, flatheads! *I* knew the first house would keep mum and let the rest of the town get roped in, and I knew they'd lay for us the third night, and consider it was *their* turn now. Well, it *is* their turn, and I'd give something to know how much they'd take for it. I *would* just like to know how they're putting in their opportunity. They can turn it into a picnic if they want to—they brought plenty provisions."

Them rapscallions took in four hundred and sixty-five dollars in that three nights. I never see money hauled in by the wagon-load like that before.

By and by, when they was asleep and snoring, Jim says:

"Don't it s'prise you de way dem kings carries on, Huck?"

"No," I says, "it don't."

"Why don't it, Huck?"

"Well, it don't, because it's in the breed. I reckon they're all alike."

"But, Huck, dese kings o' ourn is reglar rapscallions; dat's jist what dey is; dey's reglar rapscallions."

"Well, that's what I'm a-saying; all kings is mostly rapscallions, as fur as I can make out."

"Is dat so?"

"You read about them once—you'll see. Look at Henry the Eight, this 'n' 's a Sunday-school Superintendent to *him*. And look at Charles Second, and Louis Fourteen, and Louis Fifteen, and James Second, and Edward Second, and Richard Third, and forty more; besides all them Saxon heptarchies that used to rip around so in old times and raise Cain. My, you ought to seen old Henry the Eight when he was in bloom. He *was* a blossom. He used to marry a new wife every day, and chop off her head next morning. And he would do it just as indifferent as if he was ordering up eggs. 'Fetch up Nell Gwynn,' he says. They fetch her up. Next morning, 'Chop off her head!' And they chop it off. 'Fetch up Jane Shore,' he says; and up she comes. Next morning, 'Chop off her head'—and they chop it off. 'Ring up Fair Rosamun.' Fair Rosamun answers the bell. Next morning, 'Chop off her head.' And he made every one of them tell him a tale every night; and he kept that up till he had hogged a thousand and one tales that way, and then he put them all in a book, and called it Domesday Book—which was a good name and stated the case. You don't know kings, Jim, but I know them, and this old rip of ourn is one of the cleanest I've struck in history. Well, Henry he takes a notion he wants to get up some trouble with this country. How does he go at it—give notice?—give the country a show? No. All of a sudden he heaves all the tea in Boston Harbor overboard, and whacks out a declaration of independence, and dares them to come on. That was *his* style—he never give anybody a chance. He had suspicions of his father, the Duke of Wellington. Well, what did he do? Ask him to show up? No—drownded him in a butt of mamsey, like a cat. S'pose people left money laying around where he was—what did he do? He collared it. S'pose he contracted to do a thing, and you paid him, and didn't set down there and see that he done it—what did he do? He always done the other thing. S'pose he opened his mouth—what then? If he didn't shut it up powerful quick he'd lose a lie every time. That's the kind of a bug Henry was, and if we'd 'a' had him along 'stead of our kings he'd 'a' fooled that town a heap worse than ourn done. I don't say that ourn is lambs, because they ain't, when you come right down to the cold facts; but they ain't nothing to *that* old ram, anyway. All I say is, kings is kings, and you got to make allowances. Take them all around, they're a mighty ornery lot. It's the way they're raised."

"But dis one do *smell* so like de nation, Huck."

"Well, they all do, Jim. *We* can't help the way a king smells; history don't tell no way."

"Now de duke, he's a tolerble likely man in some ways."

"Yes, a duke's different. But not very different. This one's a middling hard lot for a duke. When he's drunk there ain't no near-sighted man could tell him from a king."

"Well, anyways, I doan' hanker for no mo' un um, Huck. Dese is all I kin stan'."

"It's the way I feel, too, Jim. But we've got them on our hands, and we got to remember what they are, and make allowances. Sometimes I wish we could hear of a country that's out of kings."

What was the use to tell Jim these warn't real kings and dukes? It wouldn't 'a' done no good, and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn't tell them from the real kind.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE SATIRE OF OSCAR WILDE



CONGREVE *brought to perfection an utterance that was exquisite and musical in phrase without ceasing to have the accents of the human voice. The faintest touch more of felicity or wit, and we should no longer be able to believe in these rainbow belles and urbane beaux, or in even such beings as these finding words that so delicately mirror the tinkling movement of their minds. This art of filigree phrasing Oscar Wilde pursued beyond credibility into the fantastic. We have neither known nor do we believe in people, like those in* The Importance of Being Earnest, *whose every most trivial sentiment falls from their lips with melody and grace. Indeed, the essence of Wilde's art is this artfulness; its impossibility is its charm; we believe because we know it cannot be. Wilde's effete and epicurean young men of pleasure, his gorgonian dowagers, and sophisticated Circean charmers dwell in the Half Moon Streets of a lunar London and smell the roses in country-house gardens somewhere beyond Lyra. They insult each other in harmonious cadences unknown to the earth, and bathe in a social light that never was on land or sea. They are the ideal and fabled creatures of an aphorist's dream.*

And yet, like all valid creations of the artistic imagination, they derive their authority from the truth in their fantasy. And, curiously enough, there is much resemblance between Wilde's truth-in-fantasy and that created by W. S. Gilbert, who wrote Patience to satirize Wilde as the poet Bunthorne. Gilbert's characters are always speaking the plain truth in unlikely circumstances, destroying convention with bland avowals of selfishness, venality, or discreditable motives, saying the insults we seethe inwardly at having to suppress. Sir Joseph Porter tells the entire crew of the Pinafore how he rose to be the ruler of the Queen's Navee; Yum-Yum admits, in her "artless Japanese way," that she is "much more attractive than anybody else in the whole world"; the Duke of Dunstable, proposing marriage to Lady Jane, explains that it is because among all the lovesick maidens she is "the only one who has the misfortune to be distinctly plain"

About the behavior of Gilbert's characters there is, to be sure, nearly always something a little vulgar, as if they were all merely grown-up gamins and gamines. (Many of them turn out to be office boys risen from the ranks and attorney's clerks elevated to the bench.) In contrast, the insolence and frankness of Wilde's world are elegantly aristocratic, the rudest remarks, the most egoistic vanities, the most venal motives, are voiced with high-bred ease and serenity. Gwendolen Fairfax tells Cecily Cardew, "With perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age" Cecily responds to Algernon's immediate declaration of love, "I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?" As soon as Lady Bracknell hears that Cecily has a hundred and thirty thousand pounds, she remarks, "Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her . . Pretty child!"

Wilde's plays have about them also a high-spirited nonsense quite unlike the cutting edge beneath Gilbert's nonsense. It is nonsense that ripples out of Wilde in a sort of bubbling happiness, an infinite gaiety rejoicing in its own agility and cleverness. "I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner," Algernon replies to Jack's reproaches of heartlessness "One should always eat muffins quite calmly." And in a previous dispute about Jack's devouring all the cucumber sandwiches ordered for Aunt Augusta, to Jack's objection that Algernon has himself been eating them all the time, Algernon replies, "That is quite a different matter She is my aunt."

Beneath all this froth of lighthearted frivolity, however, there is a current of keen social observation. "I never travel without my diary," Gwendolen remarks. "One should always have something sensational to read on the train." And of her own diary Cecily has told Algernon, "It is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication" There is, indeed, often a wonderful responsible insight about these gleaming lines which goes deeper than their shimmering surface. "One must be serious about something if one wants to have any amusement in life."

It is this special combination of good humor laughing at the very way of life it exemplifies that gives Wilde's satire its peculiar flavor. In a way far more favorable than Dryden meant of Shadwell we may say of Wilde "Thy inoffensive satires never bite." He is courteous even at his most insolent, devoid of malice even in his most pointed epigrams, overflowing with a joy of life that he is generously devoted to having us share. Even the conceit is innocent, for it is quite uninvidious, is playfully aware of itself, and is deployed far more for our entertainment than for its author's vanity. Many satirists have been deeper and deadlier than Wilde ever desired to be. But no satire in modern times has been more dancing, sweet-tempered, and gay.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

*** *The Importance of Being Earnest* was first performed in 1895. All three of the conversations here given are from Act One. The scene is laid in Algernon Moncrieff's luxuriously and artistically furnished flat in Half Moon Street ***

Algernon Philosophizes About Life and Love

The sound of a piano is heard from the adjoining room Lane, Algernon's manservant, is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon enters

ALGERNON. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

LANE. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

ALGERNON. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately —anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

LANE. Yes, sir. *Hands them on a salver*

ALGERNON (*Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa*). Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

LANE. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

ALGERNON. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

ALGERNON. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

LANE. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

ALGERNON. (*Languidly*) I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

LANE. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself

ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you

LANE. Thank you, sir. *Lane goes out*

ALGERNON. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

Enter Lane

LANE. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

Enter Jack. Lane goes out

ALGERNON. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

JACK. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

ALGERNON. (*Stiffly*) I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

JACK. (*Sitting down on the sofa*) In the country.

ALGERNON. What on earth do you do there?

JACK. (*Pulling off his gloves*) When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

ALGERNON. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK. (*Airily*) Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

ALGERNON. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

ALGERNON. How immensely you must amuse them! (*Goes over and takes sandwich.*) By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

JACK. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

ALGERNON. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

JACK. How perfectly delightful!

ALGERNON. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

JACK. May I ask why?

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

JACK. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

ALGERNON. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

ALGERNON. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

JACK I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

ALGERNON. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven—— (*Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes.*) Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. *Takes one and eats it*

JACK. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

ALGERNON. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt.

Obiter Dicta from Lady Bracknell

Lane has just shown in Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen
Algernon goes forward to meet them

LADY BRACKNELL. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

ALGERNON. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. *Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness*

ALGERNON. (*To Gwendolen*) Dear me, you are smart!

GWENDOLEN. I am always smart! Aren't I, Mr. Worthing?

JACK You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions.

Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner

LADY BRACKNELL. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

ALGERNON. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. *Goes over to tea-table*

LADY BRACKNELL. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

ALGERNON. (*Picking up empty plate in horror*) Good Heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

LANE. (*Gravely*) There were no cucumbers in the market this morning sir. I went down twice.

ALGERNON. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

ALGERNON. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. *Goes out*

ALGERNON. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY BRACKNELL. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

ALGERNON. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY BRACKNELL. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. (*Algernon crosses and hands tea*) Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

ALGERNON. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

LADY BRACKNELL. (*Frowning*) I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

ALGERNON. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. (*Exchanges glances with Jack*) They seem to think I should be with him.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

ALGERNON. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY BRACKNELL. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailments goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bun-

bury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

LADY BRACKNELL. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. (*Rising, and following Algernon*) I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

GWENDOLEN. Certainly, mamma.

Lady Bracknell and Algernon go into the music-room, Gwendolen remains behind

The Onerous Life of a Man of Leisure

Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen have gone
Algernon and Jack are alone together again

JACK. You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you, Algy?

ALGERNON. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

ALGERNON. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilised life should be

JACK. I am sick to death of cleverness Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

ALGERNON. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

ALGERNON. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course.

JACK. What fools!

ALGERNON. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

JACK. (*In a very patronising manner*) My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

ALGERNON. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else if she is plain.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

ALGERNON. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

JACK. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

ALGERNON. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

JACK. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

ALGERNON. Of course it isn't!

JACK. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest is carried off suddenly in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

ALGERNON. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

JACK. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly, romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

ALGERNON. I would rather like to see Cecily.

JACK. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

ALGERNON. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

JACK. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

ALGERNON. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

JACK. (*Irritably*) Oh! it always is nearly seven.

ALGERNON. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you when you weren't. . . .

ALGERNON. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre?

JACK. Oh no! I loathe listening!

ALGERNON. Well, let us go to the Club?

JACK. Oh, no! I hate talking.

ALGERNON. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten?

JACK. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

ALGERNON. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

ALGERNON. It is awfully hard work doing nothing However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

THORSTEIN VEBLEN: MAN FROM MARS



LITTLE attention has been paid to Veblen as a satirist. Economists have almost ignored the satiric animus glinting through all his work, and literary critics have for the most part left him unanalyzed. When H. L. Mencken once attempted it, he came the ridiculous cropper of reading Veblen's stylistic ironies as mere professorial verbosity. Veblen's methods were a combination of skepticism and irony, and he made them instruments of an elaborate strategy. They were both elephantine armor plate and tremendous tonnage of heavy guns. From behind the device of the Persian visitor and the Chinese sage, Montesquieu and Goldsmith had projected their satire on eighteenth-century Europe. Veblen magnified the trick to an unbelievable remoteness and abstraction. Not using any overt fiction, characterizing himself only by manner, he put on the insuperable detachment of a Martian observer: he was an inhabitant of another world curiously analyzing the alien habits of this world. Constantly he repeated disclaimers of any "intention to find fault" or to be speaking "by way of praise or blame" or to imply "anything discreditable or immoral." Almost as often he made ironical show of commendation, "these wise measures

of restraint and incitement," "this straight and narrow path of business integrity." Both serve to maintain his complicated masquerade of scientific dissection.

But Veblen is more than an interplanetary traveler from Mars. He is a Martian professor, couching his comments in a grotesquely sesquipedalian vocabulary that is a parody of all the pedantic jargon that ever disguised significance. This solemn and ludicrous style has a triple function. It underlines the grave and scholarly disinterestedness we are supposed to believe behind Veblen's statements; it helps protect the author from censorial indignation by obscuring his subversive meaning, and it makes subtly absurd the very institutions it pretends to handle with such pompous reverence. Veblen's style, in fact, which has seemed to hasty critics a weakness, is one of his greatest claims to respect. Once it is assimilated, its seeming ponderousness turns out to be rich in delicate malice and destructive sarcasms.

Veblen's career is a perfect illustration of Kenneth Burke's suggestion that in satire "the artist is seeking simultaneously to take risks and escape punishment for his boldness." Veblen's work was a detailed and devastating criticism of finance capitalism, a withering analysis of business civilization; and yet his livelihood lay in an academic career carried on in universities endowed and dominated by businessmen. But Veblen was careful to hide his comments in scholarly books on abstract topics written in a polysyllabic style not only repellent but for the most part incomprehensible to the bankers, businessmen, and corporation counsel who constituted most boards of trustees. Even so, in the end his ambiguities caught up with him. He found it increasingly difficult to obtain scholarly posts to which his eminence entitled him. At last, nowhere but in the New School for Social Research was academic freedom broad enough to harbor him.

What were these subversive doctrines that made Veblen both satirist and suspect revolutionary? All their main tenets appear in his most brilliant work of satire, The Theory of the Leisure Class. Orthodox economists, Veblen points out, have usually held that "the end of acquisition and accumulation" is "the consumption of the goods accumulated." But this, he says, very speedily ceases to be true except in the most primitive communities. The true motive "that lies at the root of ownership is emulation." "The possession of wealth confers honor; it is an invidious distinction." In our "quasi-peaceable" modern barbarism that calls itself civilization, direct aggression grows less obtrusive than it was in primitive society,

and gives way to ingenuity and overreaching. Property becomes the symbol of reputable potency. Wealth has become "a meritorious act," and the true animus of gainful pursuit may be characterized as keeping up with the Joneses.

But wealth cannot be a source of prestige, Veblen continues, unless it visibly shines in men's eyes. The Joneses must know they are being kept up with, even passed. One's scale of living is impressive to the degree that it displays lavish waste, one's resources dazzling to the extent one seems able to abstain from useful labor. "Conspicuous consumption," "conspicuous waste," and freedom from work manifested as "conspicuous leisure" are therefore impressive testimony to one's pecuniary merits The invidious function of many cultural attainments is that they are evidence not merely of one's present comfortable status, but of "a past performance of leisure": for such economically useless refinements as the classical languages, the proprieties of dress and decorum, and the more expensive and complicated games and idle pastimes can be mastered only by prolonged application not easy for those gainfully employed.

The modern businessman, to be sure, no longer pretends, like the medieval noble, to a magnificent abstention from toil. But he does hire others to do for him the leisure activities he is too busy to enact himself. If he would evince his culture by authorship, ghosts will supply him with literacy and knowledge; would he be a connoisseur of art, taste and learning may be hired to pass as his own. Wives and dependents will consume for him "dwellings, furniture, bric-à-brac, wardrobe, and meals," and an expensively useless round of activities—calls, drives, clubs, bazaars, luxuriously garbed appearances at operas, concerts, flower shows, duly prescribed pilgrimages to Europe, Saratoga, Miami. All these loudly hint the financial prowess that supports them, and are often extremely boring and fatiguing to their practitioners. Large numbers of highly specialized servants give evidence of their master's ability to afford profuse waste. Costly entertainments, finally, make the guests vicarious consumers for their host while they witness "that excess of good things" that he "is unable to dispose of single-handed."

There is no need to labor the sharp wit and satiric insight of this intellectual structure. And it is buttressed by a detailed analysis of our economic structure and its historical foundations. He uses the evidence of anthropology to anticipate that view of the origins of property which Anatole France displays in the hilarious mythological chapters of Penguin Island.

Following in the spirit of Jonathan Wild *and* The Beggar's Opera, *he anticipates the picture of business chicanery that Wells drew in* Tono-Bungay. *Distinguishing between business and industry, he suggests cogent reasons for identifying business and the business temperament with the predatory and aggressive, using a "conscientious withdrawal of efficiency" to sabotage social welfare. The gadget-ridden world of Sinclair Lewis's* Babbitt *is a dramatization of the pecuniary emulation Veblen shows multiplying useless needs. Without the acrimonious tirades of Tolstoy's* What Is Art? *Veblen reveals pecuniary snobbery imposing itself even within the realm of aesthetic judgment.*

The annihilating force of Veblen's blows is derived, of course, from their intellectual unity and strength; there are no scattered strokes, every one is in the same direction, and every one strikes home. But it would be an error to overlook his ability to sharpen their cutting edge by devices of style. The involved and painstakingly equivocal sentences uncoil their tortuous syllables interminably in a parody of academic stodginess, and then the legerdemain that was preparing is accomplished, the heavy abstractions concentrate themselves into a weighty epigram as incisive as an ax, and the slaughter is done.

Their principal weapon is a deliberately planned incongruity. We find it in the very epithets, "the performance *of leisure," the* conscientious *withdrawal of efficiency," where the mere crackle of the syllables implies an ironic derision reinforced by the unexpectedness of the thought relationships. Observe, again, such combinations as "reputable notoriety," "genteel solemnities" (academic ceremonies), "captains of erudition" (university presidents), "reputable waste of time and means," "politely blameless dissipation." Sometimes there are phrases discreetly mordant, as when the qualifications of those who find favor with administrators are outlined as "a ready versatility of convictions and a staunch devotion to their bread."*

Two things are noteworthy about this technique. One is the elaborately innocent use of planned incongruity, expressions whose sober dignity is jarred by a qualification that seems out of tone but that turns up an esoteric and wounding appropriateness The other is that the wounds so inflicted are almost invariably mortal, so that his epithet remains a derogatory monument to the concept it has slain, the ponderous phrase transformed into the headstone on a malefactor's grave. This is indeed, not only in the sense originally intended by Mrs Malaprop, but in the most literal application of that lady's words, "a nice derangement of epitaphs."

That his epithets were epitaphs, however, is not all a product of the manner. Veblen carried irony to the point where it became a burlesque of itself, but he did so to conceal a genuine anger and to protect himself in a dangerously radical undertaking. When his irony seems on occasion the most ludicrous farce, the farce is really in the facts from which his probing sentences have stripped the masks. His pretense of a positively inhuman detachment enables him to engage in his suspect enterprise of eliciting the satire intrinsic in our pecuniary standards. A trace of indignation and Veblen would have been labeled a fanatic; but that lunar irony of his ranges over delusions and leaves devastation behind.

THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS

••• *The Theory of the Leisure Class* was published in 1899 The two extracts given here are respectively from Chapter 6, "Pecuniary Canons of Taste," and Chapter 12, "Devout Observances" •••

The Pecuniary Standards of Sacred Cults

OBVIOUSLY, THE canon of conspicuous waste is accountable for a great portion of what may be called devout consumption, as, *e g.*, the consumption of sacred edifices, vestments, and other goods of the same class. Even in those modern cults to whose divinities is imputed a predilection for temples not built with hands, the sacred buildings and the other properties of the cult are constructed and decorated with some view to a reputable degree of wasteful expenditure. And it needs but little either of observation or introspection—and either will serve the turn—to assure us that the expensive splendour of the house of worship has an appreciable uplifting and mellowing effect upon the worshipper's frame of mind. It will serve to enforce the same fact if we reflect upon the sense of abject shamefulness with which any evidence of indigence or squalor about the sacred place affects all beholders. The accessories of any devout observance should be pecuniarily above reproach. This requirement is imperative, whatever latitude may be allowed with regard to these accessories in point of æsthetic or other serviceability.

It may also be in place to notice that in all communities, especially in neighbourhoods where the standard of pecuniary decency for dwellings is not high, the local sanctuary is more ornate, more conspicuously wasteful in its architecture and decoration, than the dwelling-houses of the congregation. This is true of nearly all denominations and cults, whether Christian or Pagan, but it is true in a peculiar degree of the older and maturer cults. At the same time the sanctuary commonly contributes little if anything to the physical comfort of the members. Indeed, the sacred structure not only serves the physical well-being of the members to but a slight extent, as compared with their humbler dwelling-houses; but it is felt by all men that a right and enlightened sense of the true, the beautiful, and the good demands that in all expenditure on the sanctuary anything that

might serve the comfort of the worshipper should be conspicuously absent. If any element of comfort is admitted in the fittings of the sanctuary, it should at least be scrupulously screened and masked under an ostensible austerity. In the most reputable latter-day houses of worship, where no expense is spared, the principle of austerity is carried to the length of making the fittings of the place a means of mortifying the flesh, especially in appearance. There are few persons of delicate tastes in the matter of devout consumption to whom this austerely wasteful discomfort does not appeal as intrinsically right and good. Devout consumption is of the nature of vicarious consumption. This canon of devout austerity is based on the pecuniary reputability of conspicuously wasteful consumption, backed by the principle that vicarious consumption should conspicuously not conduce to the comfort of the vicarious consumer.

The sanctuary and its fittings have something of this austerity in all the cults in which the saint or divinity to whom the sanctuary pertains is not conceived to be present and make personal use of the property for the gratification of luxurious tastes imputed to him. The character of the sacred paraphernalia is somewhat different in this respect in those cults where the habits of life imputed to the divinity more nearly approach those of an earthly patriarchal potentate—where he is conceived to make use of these consumable goods in person. In the latter case the sanctuary and its fittings take on more of the fashion given to goods destined for the conspicuous consumption of a temporal master or owner. On the other hand, where the sacred apparatus is simply employed in the divinity's service, that is to say, where it is consumed vicariously on his account by his servants, there the sacred properties take the character suited to goods that are destined for vicarious consumption only.

In the latter case the sanctuary and the sacred apparatus are so contrived as not to enhance the comfort or fulness of life of the vicarious consumer, or at any rate not to convey the impression that the end of their consumption is the consumer's comfort. For the end of vicarious consumption is to enhance, not the fulness of life of the consumer, but the pecuniary repute of the master for whose behoof the consumption takes place. Therefore priestly vestments are notoriously expensive, ornate, and inconvenient; and in the cults where the priestly servitor of the divinity is not conceived to serve him in the capacity of consort, they are of an austere, comfortless fashion. And such it is felt that they should be.

It is not only in establishing a devout standard of decent expensiveness that the principle of waste invades the domain of the canons of ritual serviceability. It touches the ways as well as the means, and draws on vicarious leisure as well as on vicarious consumption. Priestly demeanour at its best

is aloof, leisurely, perfunctory, and uncontaminated with suggestions of sensuous pleasure. This holds true, in different degrees of course, for the different cults and denominations, but in the priestly life of all anthropomorphic cults the marks of a vicarious consumption of time are visible.

The same pervading canon of vicarious leisure is also visibly present in the exterior details of devout observances and need only be pointed out in order to become obvious to all beholders. All ritual has a notable tendency to reduce itself to a rehearsal of formulas. This development of formula is most noticeable in the maturer cults, which have at the same time a more austere, ornate, and severe priestly life and garb; but it is perceptible also in the forms and methods of worship of the newer and fresher sects, whose tastes in respect of priests, vestments, and sanctuaries are less exacting. The rehearsal of the service (the term "service" carries a suggestion significant for the point in question) grows more perfunctory as the cult gains in age and consistency, and this perfunctoriness of the rehearsal is very pleasing to the correct devout taste. And with a good reason, for the fact of its being perfunctory goes to say pointedly that the master for whom it is performed is exalted above the vulgar need of actually proficuous service on the part of his servants They are unprofitable servants, and there is a honorific implication for their master in their remaining unprofitable. It is needless to point out the close analogy at this point between the priestly office and the office of the footman. It is pleasing to our sense of what is fitting in these matters, in either case, to recognise in the obvious perfunctoriness of the service that it is a *pro forma* execution only. There should be no show of agility or of dexterous manipulation in the execution of the priestly office, such as might suggest a capacity for turning off the work.

In all this there is of course an obvious implication as to the temperament, tastes, propensities, and habits of life imputed to the divinity by worshippers who live under the tradition of these pecuniary canons of reputability. Through its pervading men's habits of thought, the principle of conspicuous waste has coloured the worshippers' notions of the divinity and of the relation in which the human subject stands to him It is of course in the more naive cults that this suffusion of pecuniary beauty is most patent, but it is visible throughout. All peoples, at whatever stage of culture or degree of enlightenment, are fain to eke out a sensibly scant degree of authentic information regarding the personality and habitual surroundings of their divinities In so calling in the aid of fancy to enrich and fill in their picture of the divinity's presence and manner of life they habitually impute to him such traits as go to make up their ideal of a worthy man. And in seeking communion with the divinity the ways and means of approach are assimilated as nearly as may be to the divine ideal that is in men's minds at the

time. It is felt that the divine presence is entered with the best grace, and with the best effect, according to certain accepted methods and with the accompaniment of certain material circumstances which in popular apprehension are peculiarly consonant with the divine nature. This popularly accepted ideal of the bearing and paraphernalia adequate to such occasions of communion is, of course, to a good extent shaped by the popular apprehension of what is intrinsically worthy and beautiful in human carriage and surroundings on all occasions of dignified intercourse. It would on this account be misleading to attempt an analysis of devout demeanour by referring all evidences of the presence of a pecuniary standard of reputability back directly and baldly to the underlying norm of pecuniary emulation. So it would also be misleading to ascribe to the divinity, as popularly conceived, a jealous regard for his pecuniary standing and a habit of avoiding and condemning squalid situations and surroundings simply because they are under grade in the pecuniary respect.

And still, after all allowance has been made, it appears that the canons of pecuniary reputability do, directly or indirectly, materially affect our notions of the attributes of divinity, as well as our notions of what are the fit and adequate manner and circumstances of divine communion. It is felt that the divinity must be of a peculiarly serene and leisurely habit of life. And whenever his local habitation is pictured in poetic imagery, for edification or in appeal to the devout fancy, the devout word-painter, as a matter of course, brings out before his auditors' imagination a throne with a profusion of the insignia of opulence and power, and surrounded by a great number of servitors. In the common run of such presentations of the celestial abodes, the office of this corps of servants is a vicarious leisure,* their time and efforts being in great measure taken up with an industrially unproductive rehearsal of the meritorious characteristics and exploits of the divinity; while the background of the presentation is filled with the shimmer of the precious metals and of the more expensive varieties of precious stones. It is only in the crasser expressions of devout fancy that this intrusion of pecuniary canons into the devout ideals reaches such an extreme. An extreme case occurs in the devout imagery of the Negro population of the South. Their word-painters are unable to descend to anything cheaper than gold; so that in this case the insistence on pecuniary beauty gives a startling effect in yellow,—such as would be unbearable to a soberer taste. Still, there is probably no cult in which ideals of pecuniary merit have not

* Compare Milton's Sonnet *On His Blindness*

"His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."—*Editor's Note*

been called in to supplement the ideals of ceremonial adequacy that guide men's conception of what is right in the matter of sacred apparatus.

Similarly it is felt—and the sentiment is acted upon—that the priestly servitors of the divinity should not engage in industrially productive work, that work of any kind—any employment which is of tangible human use—must not be carried on in the divine presence, or within the precincts of the sanctuary; that whoever comes into the presence should come cleansed of all profane industrial features in his apparel or person, and should come clad in garments of more than everyday expensiveness, that on holidays set apart in honour of or for communion with the divinity no work that is of human use should be performed by any one. Even the remoter, lay dependants should render a vicarious leisure to the extent of one day in seven.

In all these deliverances of men's uninstructed sense of what is fit and proper in devout observance and in the relations of the divinity, the effectual presence of the canons of pecuniary reputability is obvious enough, whether these canons have had their effect on the devout judgment in this respect immediately or at the second remove.

The Clergy as a Vicarious-Consumer Class

The priest should not put his hand to mechanically productive work; but he should consume in large measure. But even as regards his consumption it is to be noted that it should take such forms as do not obviously conduce to his own comfort or fulness of life; it should conform to the rules governing vicarious consumption, as explained under that head in an earlier chapter. It is not ordinarily in good form for the priestly class to appear well fed or in hilarious spirits. Indeed, in many of the more elaborate cults the injunction against other than vicarious consumption by this class frequently goes so far as to enjoin mortification of the flesh. And even in those modern denominations which have been organised under the latest formulations of the creed, in a modern industrial community, it is felt that all levity and avowed zest in the enjoyment of the good things of this world is alien to the true clerical decorum. Whatever suggests that these servants of an invisible master are living a life, not of devotion to their master's good fame, but of application to their own ends, jars harshly on our sensibilities as something fundamentally and eternally wrong. They are a servant class, although, being servants of a very exalted master, they rank high in the social scale by virtue of this borrowed light. Their consumption is vicarious consumption; and since, in the advanced cults, their master has no need of material gain, their occupation is vicarious leisure in the full sense. "Whether

therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

It may be added that so far as the laity is assimilated to the priesthood in the respect that they are conceived to be servants of the divinity, so far this imputed vicarious character attaches also to the layman's life. The range of application of this corollary is somewhat wide. It applies especially to such movements for the reform or rehabilitation of the religious life as are of an austere, pietistic, ascetic cast,—where the human subject is conceived to hold his life by a direct servile tenure from his spiritual sovereign. That is to say, where the institution of the priesthood lapses, or where there is an exceptionally lively sense of the immediate and masterful presence of the divinity in the affairs of life, there the layman is conceived to stand in an immediate servile relation to the divinity, and his life is construed to be a performance of vicarious leisure directed to the enhancement of his master's repute. In such cases of reversion there is a return to the unmediated relation of subservience, as the dominant fact of the devout attitude. The emphasis is thereby thrown on an austere and discomforting vicarious leisure, to the neglect of conspicuous consumption as a means of grace.

A doubt will present itself as to the full legitimacy of this characterisation of the sacerdotal scheme of life, on the ground that a considerable proportion of the modern priesthood depart from the scheme in many details. The scheme does not hold good for the clergy of those denominations which have in some measure diverged from the old established schedule of beliefs or observances. These take thought, at least ostensibly or permissively, for the temporal welfare of the laity, as well as for their own. Their manner of life, not only in the privacy of their own household, but often even before the public, does not differ in an extreme degree from that of secular-minded persons, either in its ostensible austerity or in the archaism of its apparatus. This is truest for those denominations that have wandered the farthest. To this objection it is to be said that we have here to do not with a discrepancy in the theory of sacerdotal life, but with an imperfect conformity to the scheme on the part of this body of clergy. They are but a partial and imperfect representative of the priesthood, and must not be taken as exhibiting the sacerdotal scheme of life in an authentic and competent manner. The clergy of the sects and denominations might be characterised as a half-caste priesthood, or a priesthood in process of becoming or of reconstitution. Such a priesthood may be expected to show the characteristics of the sacerdotal office only as blended and obscured with alien motives and traditions, due to the disturbing presence of other factors than those of animism and status in the purposes of the organisations to which this non-conforming fraction of the priesthood belongs.

Appeal may be taken direct to the taste of any person with a discriminating and cultivated sense of the sacerdotal proprieties, or to the prevalent sense of what constitutes clerical decorum in any community at all accustomed to think or to pass criticism on what a clergyman may or may not do without blame. Even in the most extremely secularised denominations, there is some sense of a distinction that should be observed between the sacerdotal and the lay scheme of life. There is no person of sensibility but feels that where the members of this denominational or sectarian clergy depart from traditional usage, in the direction of a less austere or less archaic demeanour and apparel, they are departing from the ideal of priestly decorum. There is probably no community and no sect within the range of the Western culture in which the bounds of permissible indulgence are not drawn appreciably closer for the incumbent of the priestly office than for the common layman. If the priest's own sense of sacerdotal propriety does not effectually impose a limit, the prevalent sense of the proprieties on the part of the community will commonly assert itself so obtrusively as to lead to his conformity or his retirement from office.

Few if any members of any body of clergy, it may be added, would avowedly seek an increase of salary for gain's sake, and if such avowal were openly made by a clergyman, it would be found obnoxious to the sense of propriety among his congregation. It may also be noted in this connection that no one but the scoffers and the very obtuse are not instinctively grieved inwardly at a jest from the pulpit, and that there are none whose respect for their pastor does not suffer through any mark of levity on his part in any conjuncture of life, except it be levity of a palpably histrionic kind—a constrained unbending of dignity. The diction proper to the sanctuary and to the priestly office should also carry little if any suggestion of effective everyday life, and should not draw upon the vocabulary of modern trade or industry. Likewise, one's sense of the proprieties is readily offended by too detailed and intimate a handling of industrial and other purely human questions at the hands of the clergy. There is a certain level of generality below which a cultivated sense of the proprieties in homiletical discourse will not permit a well-bred clergyman to decline in his discussion of temporal interests. These matters that are of human and secular consequence simply, should properly be handled with such a degree of generality and aloofness as may imply that the speaker represents a master whose interest in secular affairs goes only so far as to permissively countenance them.

It is further to be noticed that the non-conforming sects and variants whose priesthood is here under discussion, vary among themselves in the degree of their conformity to the ideal scheme of sacerdotal life. In a general way it will be found that the divergence in this respect is widest in the case

of the relatively young denominations, and especially in the case of such of the newer denominations as have chiefly a lower middle-class constituency. They commonly show a large admixture of humanitarian, philanthropic, or other motives which can not be classed as expressions of the devotional attitude; such as the desire of learning or of conviviality, which enter largely into the effective interest shown by members of these organisations. The non-conforming or sectarian movements have commonly proceeded from a mixture of motives, some of which are at variance with that sense of status on which the priestly office rests. Sometimes, indeed, the motive has been in good part a revulsion against a system of status. Where this is the case the institution of the priesthood has broken down in the transition, at least partially. The spokesman of such an organisation is at the outset a servant and representative of the organisation, rather than a member of a special priestly class and the spokesman of a divine master. And it is only by a process of gradual specialisation that, in succeeding generations, this spokesman regains the position of priest, with a full investiture of sacerdotal authority, and with its accompanying austere, archaic and vicarious manner of life. The like is true of the breakdown and redintegration of devout ritual after such a revulsion. The priestly office, the scheme of sacerdotal life, and the schedule of devout observances are rehabilitated only gradually, insensibly, and with more or less variation in details, as the persistent human sense of devout propriety reasserts its primacy in questions touching the interest in the preternatural,—and, it may be added, as the organisation increases in wealth, and so acquires more of the point of view and the habits of thought of a leisure class.

Beyond the priestly class, and ranged in an ascending hierarchy, ordinarily comes a superhuman vicarious leisure class of saints, angels, etc.,—or their equivalents in the ethnic cults. These rise in grade, one above another, according to an elaborate system of status. The principle of status runs through the entire hierarchical system, both visible and invisible. The good fame of these several orders of the supernatural hierarchy also commonly requires a certain tribute of vicarious consumption and vicarious leisure. In many cases they accordingly have devoted to their service sub-orders of attendants or dependents who perform a vicarious leisure for them, after much the same fashion as was found in an earlier chapter to be true of the dependent leisure class under the patriarchal system.

WELLS: HIGH HOPES AND DARK DOUBTS



H. G. WELLS is, in a way, the most optimistic of all contemporary satirists. Full of vitamins and bounce, overflowing with emphatic opinions and bursting with hydrogenous assurance, he has bustled all over the modern world for the past forty years throwing off panaceas like a cheerfully peripatetic volcano in eruption. The more he has found out of joint, the happier and more certain he has been that he knew exactly how to put it right. He has outlined history, explained the science of life, laid down the law about the work, wealth, and happiness of mankind, drawn almost annual up-to-the-minute blueprints of the future: a radiant millennium in which everyone would be more and more like a magnified H. G. Wells. And so the artist in him has been slowly smothered by the pamphleteer, the compiler of information, the didactic moralizer, the confused minor prophet in scientific fancy dress.

Wells was too impatient to go on embodying what he wanted to say in works of imaginative power and literary form. Direct haranguing and propaganda became for him more realistic, more swift, more powerful. But it is doubtful if either immediately or in the future The World of William

Clissold or The Open Conspiracy will prove more meaningful than The Time Machine or The Sleeper Wakes. In his earlier and more creative work the artist controlled the propagandist, "the interrogation of his lantern going out for a little way upon the mysterious vast serenity of the night": criticism was fused with vivid pictorial realization and emotional power. But more and more the lesson intruded upon the art as Wells developed a sort of hybrid debate-with-fictional-trimmings. Correspondingly his imaginative energy dwindled (although it never quite died), and he became rambling, prosy, and redundant.

It was the primary error of Wells's literary career. For the merit of his satire lies much more in the vigor and vividness of what he sees than in any profound intellectual grasp. At his best, he is, like Dickens in the nineteenth century, a brilliant depicter of the color and multiplicity of life, a lusty sensitivity soaking up impressions and projecting them with enormous vitality. He is not a thinker. His "open conspiracy" is a childish dream, the "cold scientific intelligences" he loves to talk of are only another kind of deus ex machina, the future he expects to pop out of the laboratory as Aladdin's Palace to be built by a powerful jinni called Science if we only learn to rub the lamp with the right formula. His optimism about the future is more glandular than rational; it is only the "best of all possible worlds" on the deferred-payment plan.

These virtues and defects are all revealed in even the best of his historty novels. Tono-Bungay is a superb picture of the disorder and piracy of modern business. To a world that had never heard of the Van Sweringens or Samuel Insull (or Veblen) there might seem to be nothing but caricature in the story of Edward Ponderevo, little provincial druggist who advertises an alcoholic nostrum into a source of enormous wealth and makes himself a Napoleon of finance whose empire grows ever more unwieldy and precarious with watered assets. Wells amply demonstrates that most advertising is simply legalized lying and the financial adventurer for the most part a racketeer whose muddled greediness does not even understand the forces he deals in, so that again and again he brings himself as well as those innocently dependent upon him to spectacular ruin.

But he deflates the Ponderevos only to fall for the Fords and Monds. He does not see that the great builders of business empires (distinguishing business, as Veblen does, from industry) are ten times as disastrous as the financial charlatans; that they ride over their victims like juggernauts in comparison with whom the Ponderevos are no more than the painted

demons of a miracle play He sees that in the modern financial world pirates and ignoramuses can skyrocket up to power and then scatter destruction in their fall .He does not see that even when they do not fall exploitation is their métier and the chaos of modern business the creative medium of their rapacity. Wells knows that business, again in Veblen's phrase, is a conspiracy against the welfare of society, but he ingenuously believes that the most unscrupulous and successful of the conspirators will voluntarily mend their ways and enter with technicians and engineers into an "open conspiracy" for the public good.

He is much more successful when, as in Kipps and Mr Polly, he merely shows the desperate small shopkeeper, the failing tradesman, ignorant, uneducated, muddled, miserable, being squeezed by the pitiless competition of industrial society. Mr. Polly is a far superior work of literary art to any of Wells's more pretentious sermonizings, and a far greater and more impressive lesson There are pathos and understanding in the picture of this confused little man trying with painful inefficiency to satisfy his employers as a drapers' clerk or with only a feeble grasp upon arithmetic to keep a tiny haberdasher's shop from falling into insolvency Mr Polly's cheap and inadequate schooling has served only to fill his mind with vague misinformation and nebulous longings. Books and the popular press are for him only a blurred escape from reality, scrambling through the big words he cannot pronounce and only partly understands. "Sesquipedalian verbosity" becomes for him "sesquippledan verjuicery"; "vorocious return to the heritage," he mumbles to himself, seeing American tourists clamorous amid the grandeur of Canterbury. Or again, "portly capons," he says, under the erroneous impression that the words describe some particularly dignified kind of medieval prelate. There is in him, indeed, a groping imagination crippled by the meanness of his environment that makes him clumsily responsive to the poetry of words and the wonder of the great cathedral. He would have been happy carving some quaint gargoyle or working as a handicraftsman in the Middle Ages; in the harsh world of modern industrialism he has no place

Literary criticism has not yet done full justice to the satire of Wells's early romances. These scientific fantasies are no less deeply suffused with social purpose than his novels of propagandist realism. The Island of Dr. Moreau, he said, symbolized "the bestial aspects of human life," and The Sleeper Wakes, according to Geoffrey West, "a humanitarianism which seemed to Wells to have been falling into an ever deeper slumber" in the

late nineteenth century. The Invisible Man *suggests "the dangers of power without moral control,"* The Time Machine *"the responsibility of men to mankind,"* The War of the Worlds *"the development of intelligence at the expense of human sympathy." But the great triumph of all these tales is that the meaning has been completely melted into their fables, made an organic part of the concrete embodiment. And the embodiment is superb in its vividness and emotional intensity.*

Who can forget the Martians in The War of the Worlds *sluggishly writhing in the dark pit of their rocket space ships, or striding across the landscape in their high tripods ululating to each other? Who can forget the Beast-Men in* The Island of Dr. Moreau, *the Saying of the Law, the dread of the House of Pain, or the Monkey-Man's love of "Big Thinks" and contempt for the everyday common sense of "Little Thinks"? Who can forget the lofty glazed-in spaces of the metropolis in* The Sleeper Wakes, *the blue canvas of the labor slaves swarming in the ways below, the glaring sky signs of the churches reading "Get in Good with God," and the strident news machines bawling "Whoop! Garoo! Listen to a live paper yelp!"*

The First Men in the Moon *has been chosen to illustrate these less observed aspects of Wells's satire because it not only shares the dramatic vividness of the others, but suggests certain analogies with the darker satire of Swift. Indeed, in all the stories where Wells the artist is dominant we find less effervescent faith in mankind than in those that are openly didactic. The childlike, decadent, and pretty Eloi, in* The Time Machine, *descended from a rose-wreathed capitalism, and the etiolated underground Morlocks descended from an enslaved laboring class, are hardly so encouraging a vision of the future as* Men Like Gods *or* The World Set Free. *But the very structure of* The First Men in the Moon *is Swiftian. the imaginary voyage, the world of unfamiliar ways, the interview of Cavor and the Grand Lunar so like that of Gulliver and the King of Brobdingnag. And observe that Wells gives greater tension to his interview by the fact that human beings are a greater danger to the Selenites than they are to Swift's Brobdingnagians.*

Swiftian too are the haunting and equivocal parallels between the strange society of the moon and modern industrial society. The suggested growth of specialization to the point where it becomes a biological warping of personality, the dehumanizing of purpose to mere mechanical activity and production, the elevation of the social organism into a supreme end de-

vouring all other fulfillments, ultimately make the Selenites seem, to human emotion, horrors transcending the human evils the Grand Lunar elicits from Cavor. But no evil, of course, is really inhuman. Wells's Selenites embody a prophetic symbolism greater, perhaps, than he knew. They foreshadow the totalitarian immolation of humanity to a monstrous aggrandizement of the state. This is what gives Wells's satire its greatest significance. It is full of portents, doubts, and warnings, not merely laying bare before us the evils we already know and strive to ignore, but suggesting those dangers in the dark of futurity into which we may be blindly running with all our force.

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON

The First Men in the Moon was published as a serial in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* and in book form in 1901. The selection given here consists of most of Chapter 24 and all of Chapter 25. It is in the form of a radio message from the moon

Cavor and the Grand Lunar

WE ASCENDED the spiral of a vertical way for some time and then passed through a series of huge halls, dome-roofed, and gloriously decorated. The approach to the Grand Lunar was certainly contrived to give one a vivid impression of his greatness. The halls—all happily sufficiently luminous for my terrestrial eye—were a cunning and elaborate crescendo of space and decoration. The effect of their progressive size was enhanced by the steady diminution in the lighting, and by a thin haze of incense that thickened as one advanced. In the earlier ones the vivid, clear light made everything finite and concrete to me. I seemed to advance continually to something larger, dimmer, and less material.

"I must confess that all this splendour made me feel extremely shabby and unworthy. I was unshaven and unkempt, I had brought no razor; I had a coarse beard over my mouth. On earth I have always been inclined to despise any attention to my person beyond a proper care for cleanliness; but under the exceptional circumstances in which I found myself, representing, as I did, my planet and my kind, and depending very largely upon the attractiveness of my appearance for a proper reception, I would have given much for something a little more artistic and dignified than the husks I wore. I had been so serene in the belief that the moon was uninhabited as to overlook such precautions altogether. As it was I was dressed in a flannel jacket, knickerbockers, and golfing stockings, stained with every sort of dirt the moon offered; slippers (of which the left heel was wanting), and a blanket, through a hole in which I thrust my head. (These clothes, indeed, I still wear.) Sharp bristles are anything but an improvement to my cast of features, and there was an unmended tear at the knee of my knickerbocker that showed conspicuously as I squatted in my litter; my right stocking, too, persisted in getting about my ankle. I am fully alive to the

injustice my appearance did humanity, and if by any expedient I could have improvised something a little out of the way and imposing I would have done so. But I could hit upon nothing. I did what I could with my blanket—folding it somewhat after the fashion of a toga, and for the rest I sat as upright as the swaying of my litter permitted

"Imagine the largest hall you have ever been in, elaborately decorated with blue and whitish-blue majolica, lit by blue light, you know not how, and surging with metallic or livid-white creatures of such a mad diversity as I have hinted. Imagine this hall to end in an open archway beyond which is a still larger hall, and beyond this yet another and still larger one, and so on At the end of the vista a flight of steps, like the steps of Ara Coeli at Rome, ascends out of sight. Higher and higher these steps appear to go as one draws nearer their base. But at last I came under a huge archway and beheld the summit of these steps, and upon it the Grand Lunar exalted on his throne.

"He was seated in a blaze of incandescent blue. A hazy atmosphere filled the place so that its walls seemed invisibly remote This gave him an effect of floating in a blue-black void. He seemed at first a small, self-luminous cloud, brooding on his glaucous throne, his brain-case must have measured many yards in diameter. For some reason that I cannot fathom a number of blue searchlights coming from behind the throne gave a star-like radiance to the halo immediately surrounding him. About him, and little and indistinct in this glow, a number of body-servants sustained and supported him, and over-shadowed and standing in a huge semicircle beneath him were his intellectual subordinates, his flatterers and servants, and all the distinguished insects of the court of the moon. Still lower stood ushers and messengers, and then all down the countless steps of the throne were guards, and at the base, enormous, various, indistinct, a vast swaying multitude of the minor dignitaries of the moon.

"At first as I peered into the radiating blaze, this quintessential brain looked very much like a thin, featureless bladder with dim, undulating ghosts of convolutions writhing visibly within. Then beneath its enormity and just above the edge of the throne one saw with a start minute elfin eyes peering out of the blaze. No face, but eyes, as if they peered through holes. At first I could see no more than these two staring little eyes, and then below I distinguished the little dwarfed body and its insect-jointed limbs, shrivelled and white. The eyes stared down at me with a strange intensity, and the lower part of the swollen globe was wrinkled Ineffectual-looking little hand-tentacles steadied this shape on the throne. . .

"It was great. It was pitiful. One forgot the hall and the crowd.

"I ascended the staircase by jerks. It seemed to me that the purple-glow-

ing brain-case above us spread over me, and took more and more of the whole effect into itself as I drew nearer. The tiers of attendants and helpers grouped about their master seemed to dwindle and fade into the glare. I saw that the shadowy attendants were busy spraying that great brain with a cooling spray, and patting and sustaining it. For my own part I sat gripping my swaying litter and staring at the Grand Lunar, unable to turn my gaze aside. And at last, as I reached a little landing that was separated only by ten steps or so from the supreme seat, the woven splendour of the music reached a climax and ceased, and I was left naked, as it were, in that vastness, beneath the still scrutiny of the Grand Lunar's eyes.

"He was scrutinising the first man he had ever seen. . . .

"I became aware of a faint wheezy noise. The Grand Lunar was addressing me. It was like the rubbing of a finger upon a pane of glass.

"I watched him attentively for a time and then glanced at the alert Phi-oo. I felt amidst those filmy beings ridiculously thick and fleshy and solid, my head all jaw and black hair. My eyes went back to the Grand Lunar. He had ceased; his attendants were busy, and his shining superficies was glistening and running with cooling spray.

"Phi-oo meditated through an interval. He consulted Tsi-puff. Then he began piping his recognisable English—at first a little nervously, so that he was not very clear.

" 'M'm—the Grand Lunar—wished to say—wishes to say—he gathers you are—m'm—men—that you are a man from the planet earth. He wishes to say that he welcomes you—welcomes you—and wishes to learn—learn, if I may use the word—the state of your world, and the reason why you came to this.'

"He understood, he explained, that we lived on the surface of the earth, that our air and sea were outside the globe; the latter part, indeed, he already knew from his astronomical specialists. He was very anxious to have more detailed information of what he called this extraordinary state of affairs, for from the solidity of the earth there had always been a disposition to regard it as uninhabitable. He endeavoured first to ascertain the extremes of temperature to which we earth beings were exposed, and he was deeply interested by my descriptive treatment of clouds and rain. His imagination was assisted by the fact that the lunar atmosphere in the outer galleries of the night side is not infrequently very foggy. He seemed inclined to marvel that we did not find the sunlight too intense for our eyes, and was interested in my attempt to explain that the sky was tempered to a bluish color through the refraction of the air, though I doubt if he clearly understood that. I explained how the iris of the human eyes can contract the pupil and save the delicate internal structure from the excess of sunlight, and was allowed

to approach within a few feet of the Presence in order that this structure might be seen. This led to a comparison of the lunar and terrestrial eyes. The former is not only excessively sensitive to such light as men can see, but it can also see heat, and every difference in temperature within the moon renders objects visible to it.

"The iris was quite a new organ to the Grand Lunar. For a time he amused himself by flashing his rays into my face and watching my pupils contract. As a consequence, I was dazzled and blinded for some little time. . . .

"But in spite of that discomfort, I found something reassuring by insensible degrees in the rationality of this business of question and answer. I could shut my eyes, think of my answer, and almost forget that the Grand Lunar has no face. . . .

"When I had descended again to my proper place the Grand Lunar asked how we sheltered ourselves from heat and storms, and I expounded to him the arts of building and furnishing. Here we wandered into misunderstandings and cross-purposes, due largely, I must admit, to the looseness of my expressions. For a long time I had great difficulty in making him understand the nature of a house. To him and his attendant Selenites it seemed no doubt the most whimsical thing in the world that men should build houses when they might descend into excavations, and an additional complication was introduced by the attempt I made to explain that men had originally begun their homes in caves, and that they were now taking their railways and many establishments beneath the surface. Here I think a desire for intellectual completeness betrayed me. There was also a considerable tangle due to an equally unwise attempt on my part to explain about mines. Dismissing this topic at last in an incomplete state, the Grand Lunar inquired what we did with the interior of our globe.

"A tide of twittering and piping swept into the remotest corners of that great assembly when it was at last made clear that we men know absolutely nothing of the contents of the world upon which the immemorial generations of our ancestors have been evolved Three times had I to repeat that of all the 4,000 miles of substance between the earth and its centre men knew only to the depth of a mile, and that very vaguely. I understood the Grand Lunar to ask why I had come to the moon seeing we had scarcely touched our own planet yet, but he did not trouble me at that time to proceed to an explanation, being too anxious to pursue the details of this mad inversion of all his ideas.

"He reverted to the question of weather, and I tried to describe the perpetually changing sky, and snow, and frost and hurricanes. 'But when the night comes,' he asked, 'is it not cold?'

"I told him it was colder than by day.

" 'And does not your atmosphere freeze?'

"I told him not; that it was never cold enough for that, because our nights were so short.

" 'Not even liquefy?'

"I was about to say 'No,' but then it occurred to me that one part at least of our atmosphere, the water vapour of it, does sometimes liquefy and form dew and sometimes freeze and form frost—a process perfectly analogous to the freezing of all the external atmosphere of the moon during its longer night. I made myself clear on this point, and from that the Grand Lunar went on to speak with me of sleep. For the need of sleep that comes so regularly every twenty-four hours to all things is part also of our earthly inheritance. On the moon they rest only at rare intervals and after exceptional exertions. Then I tried to describe to him the soft splendours of a summer night, and from that I passed to a description of those animals that prowl by night and sleep by day. I told him of lions and tigers, and here it seemed that we had come to a deadlock. For, save in their waters, there are no creatures in the moon, not absolutely domestic and subject to his will, and so it has been for immemorial years. They have monstrous water creatures, but no evil beasts, and the idea of anything strong and large existing 'outside' in the night is very difficult for them."

(The record is here too broken to transcribe for the space of perhaps twenty words or more.)

"He talked with his attendants, as I suppose, upon the strange superficiality and unreasonableness of (man), who lives on the mere surface of a world, a creature of waves and winds and all the chances of space, who cannot even unite to overcome the beasts that prey upon his kind, and yet who dares to invade another planet. During this aside I sat thinking, and then at his desire I told him of the different sorts of men. He searched me with questions. 'And for all sorts of work you have the same sort of men. But who thinks? Who governs?'

"I gave him an outline of the democratic method.

"When I had done he ordered cooling sprays upon his brow, and then requested me to repeat my explanation, conceiving something had miscarried.

" 'Do they not do different things then?' said Phi-oo.

"Some I admitted were thinkers and some officials; some hunted, some were mechanics, some artists, some toilers. 'But all rule,' I said.

" 'And have they not different shapes to fit them to their different duties?'

" 'None that you can see,' I said, 'except perhaps their clothes. Their minds perhaps differ a little,' I reflected.

" 'Their minds must differ a great deal,' said the Grand Lunar, 'or they would all want to do the same things.'

"In order to bring myself into a closer harmony with his preconceptions, I said that his surmise was right. 'It was all hidden in the brain,' I said; 'but the difference was there. Perhaps if one could see the minds and souls of *men they would be as varied and unequal as the Selenites.* There were great men and small men, men who could reach out far and wide, and men who could go swiftly; noisy, trumpet-minded men, and men who could remember without thinking. . . .' "

(The record is indistinct for three words.)

"He interrupted me to recall me to my previous statement. 'But you said all men rule?' he pressed.

" 'To a certain extent,' I said, and made, I fear, a denser fog with my explanation.

"He reached out to a salient fact. 'Do you mean,' he asked, 'that there is no Grand Earthly?'

"I thought of several people, but assured him finally there was none. I explained that such autocrats and emperors as we had tried upon earth had usually ended in drink, or vice, or violence, and that the large and influential section of the people of the earth to which I belonged, the Anglo-Saxons, did not mean to try that sort of thing again. At which the Grand Lunar was even more amazed.

" 'But how do you keep even such wisdom as you have?' he asked; and I explained to him the way we helped our limited"

(A word omitted here, probably "brains.")

"with libraries of books. I explained to him how our science was growing by the united labours of innumerable little men, and on that he made no comment save that it was evident we had mastered much in spite of our social savagery, or we could not have come to the moon. Yet the contrast was very marked. With knowledge the Selenites grew and changed; mankind stored their knowledge about them and remained brutes—equipped. He said this . . ."

(Here there is a short piece of the record indistinct.)

"He then caused me to describe how we went about this earth of ours, and I described to him our railways and ships. For a time he could not understand that we had had the use of steam only one hundred years, but when he did he was clearly amazed. I may mention as a singular thing that the Selenites use years to count by, just as we do on earth, though I can make nothing of their numeral system. That, however, does not matter, because Phi-oo understands ours. From that I went on to tell him that mankind had dwelt in cities only for nine or ten thousand years, and that we were still

not united in one brotherhood, but under many different forms of government. This astonished the Grand Lunar very much, when it was made clear to him. At first he thought we referred merely to administrative areas

" 'Our States and Empires are still the rawest sketches of what order will some day be,' I said, and so I came to tell him . . ."

(At this point a length of record that probably represents thirty or forty words is totally illegible.)

"The Grand Lunar was greatly impressed by the folly of men in clinging to the inconvenience of diverse tongues. 'They want to communicate and yet not to communicate,' he said, and then for a long time he questioned me closely concerning war.

"He was at first perplexed and incredulous. 'You mean to say,' he asked, seeking confirmation, 'that you run about over the surface of your world—this world, whose riches you have scarcely begun to scrape—killing one another for beasts to eat?'

"I told him that was perfectly correct.

"He asked for particulars to assist his imagination. 'But do not your ships and your poor little cities get injured?' he asked, and I found the waste of property and conveniences seemed to impress upon him almost as much as the killing. 'Tell me more,' said the Grand Lunar; 'make me see pictures. I cannot conceive these things.'

"And so, for a space, though something loath, I told him the story of earthly War.

"I told him of the first orders and ceremonies of war, of warnings and ultimatums, and the marshaling and marching of troops. I gave him an idea of manoeuvres and positions and battle joined. I told him of sieges and assaults, of starvation and hardship in trenches, and of sentinels freezing in the snow. I told him of routs and surprises, and desperate last stands and faint hopes, and the pitiless pursuit of fugitives and the dead upon the field. I told, too, of the past, of invasions and massacres, of the Huns and Tartars, and the wars of Mahomet and the Caliphs and of the Crusades. And as I went on, and Phi-oo translated, the Selenites cooed and murmured in a steadily intensified emotion.

"I told them an ironclad could fire a shot of a ton twelve miles, and go through twenty feet of iron—and how we could steer torpedoes under water. I went on to describe a Maxim gun in action and what I could imagine of the Battle of Colenso The Grand Lunar was so incredulous that he interrupted the translation of what I had said in order to have my verification of my account. They particularly doubted my description of the men cheering and rejoicing as they went into battle.

" 'But surely they do not like it!' translated Phi-oo.

"I assured *them men of my race considered battle the most* glorious experience of life, at which the whole assembly was stricken with amazement.

" 'But what good is this war?' asked the Grand Lunar, sticking to his theme.

" 'Oh! as for good!' said I, 'it thins the population!'

" 'But why should there be a need—?'

"There came a pause, the cooling sprays impinged upon his brow, and *then he spoke again.*"

In this unsatisfactory manner the penultimate message of Cavor dies out. One seems to see him away there amidst his blue-lit apparatus intently signalling us to the last, all unaware of the curtain of confusion that drops between us; all unaware, too, of the final dangers that even then must have been creeping upon him. His disastrous want of vulgar common sense had utterly *betrayed him. He had talked of war, he had talked of all the strength* and irrational violence of men, of their insatiable aggressions, their tireless futility of conflict. He had filled the whole moon world with this impression of our race, and then I think it is plain he admitted that upon himself alone hung the possibility—at least for a long time—of any other men reaching the moon. The line the cold, inhuman reason of the moon world would take seems plain enough to me, and a suspicion of it, and then perhaps some sudden *sharp realisation of it, must have come to him.* One imagines him going about the moon with the remorse of this fatal indiscretion growing in his mind. During a certain time most assuredly the Grand Lunar was deliberating the new situation, and for all that time Cavor went as free as ever he had gone. We imagine that obstacles of some sort prevented his getting to his electro-magnetic apparatus again after that last message I have given. For some days we received nothing. Perhaps he was having fresh audiences, and trying to evade his previous admissions. Who can hope to guess?

And then suddenly, like a cry in the night, like a cry that is followed by a *stillness, came the last message. It is the briefest fragment,* the broken beginnings of two sentences.

The first was:

"I was mad to let the Grand Lunar know——"

There was an interval of perhaps a minute. One imagines some interruption from without. A departure from the instrument—a dreadful hesitation among the looming masses of apparatus in that dim, blue-lit cavern—a sudden rush back to it, full of a resolve that came too late. Then, as if it were hastily transmitted, came:

"Cavorite made as follows: take——"

There followed one word, a quite unmeaning word as it stands—"uless."

And that is all.

It may be he made a hasty attempt to spell "useless" when his fate was close upon him. Whatever it was that was happening about that apparatus, we cannot tell. Whatever it was we shall never, I know, receive another message from the moon. For my own part a vivid dream has come to my help, and I see, almost as plainly as though I had seen it in actual fact, a blue-lit dishevelled Cavor struggling in the grip of a great multitude of those insect Selenites, struggling ever more desperately and hopelessly as they swarm upon him, shouting, expostulating, perhaps even at last fighting, and being forced backward step by step out of all speech or sign of his fellows, for evermore into the Unknown—into the dark, into that silence that has no end.

THE ABSENCE OF G. B. S.



SHAW IS one of the very greatest writers of our time, and, without the slightest doubt, its greatest satirist. Edmund Wilson has compared him to Plato, G. K. Chesterton and many others to Voltaire, his biographer J. P. Collis to Swift and Dryden He should be included in any work covering the significant satire of the present age. But Mr. Shaw denies that he is a satirist, and refuses to allow his work to be quoted except in such brief passages as may legitimately be used to illustrate a critical essay.

When the present book was planned, the editor made a careful search for a scene from Shaw's plays that would represent his characteristic qualities and that could stand as an artistic unit even without its context. After a good deal of thought, a selection was made from Major Barbara*: the latter part of Act II, from the moment Andrew Undershaft appears in the West Ham shelter of the Salvation Army to the point at which the others all go off to the meeting in Mile End Road, with Undershaft snorting on the trombone and Cusins shouting "Immenso giubilo," while Barbara endures the agony of her Gethsemane and Bill Walker taunts her with an ironical "Wot prawce Selvytion nah?" This scene, it was felt, was a completely intelligible little drama by itself; and it had all Shaw's great gifts, his high spirits, his flashing wit, his keen realization of unfamiliar truth, his dramatic power, and his understanding of the noble griefs of noble natures. Mr. Shaw was asked for permission to use the scene on his own terms, and with full acknowledgment of his consideration.*

His reply was ambiguous. The scene, he thought, would be misunderstood in a collection of satires; otherwise he should not object. He added that the translations from Euripides quoted by Cusins were the literary property of Gilbert Murray, a fact with which the editor was acquainted.

This, however, seemed an invitation to dissipate the only objection raised, all the more so because one would hardly be interested for satiric purposes in securing Professor Murray's permission to quote an isolated fragment from Euripides. Consequently a reply was made in which some of the things said in the introduction to this volume were summarized pointing out that satire has so many different techniques and emotional tones that being included in a collection of satires should not create any misleading assumptions or misunderstandings.

Mr. Shaw replied that he was not a satirist in any sense; that he dealt in natural history sincerely. Barbara, he said, must not be associated with Gulliver and Candide. From this position he has refused to be moved.

The implied inconsistency between being a satirist and writing natural history sincerely is, of course, completely nonexistent. All great writing is sincere in those perspectives that make it great; the great satirist would not be great if he did not see deeply and truly into reality with a penetration cutting so destructively through conventional beliefs that it sometimes appears to the superficial observer to be what he calls paradoxical nonsense. And true satire, like the wit of true paradox, is neither the foolish grin of Sganarelle nor the venomous railing of Thersites, but—to use Shaw's own term—"natural history," presenting us with startlingly altered and sharply critical revelations of the truth about human nature, society, and the world. In this sense Samuel Butler is a natural historian of the relations of parents and children, Dickens a natural historian of the workings of nineteenth-century industrialism, and Shaw a natural historian of modern society, without its being one jot less true that all three are satirists too.

It is no strange or unusual thing, as many commentators have pointed out, for an artist to convey more or different things than enter into his conscious purpose. "The artist often triumphs over his intentions," Tolstoy remarked. And Lewis Carroll writes to one of his correspondents "Still, you know, words mean more than we mean to express when we use them; so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer means. So, whatever good meanings there are in the book, I'm glad to accept as the meanings of the book." Perhaps some realization of this sort entered Mr. Shaw's mind when he was asked the meaning of Heartbreak House, *and replied, "How should I know? I am only the author."*

Nevertheless, Mr. Shaw or any other author has an indefeasible right to deny even the paid use of his writings to other persons. Legally, his work cannot be printed in defiance of his objections; but even if there were

some flaw in his legal rights, morally one would be debarred from doing so. But neither can the editor accept Mr. Shaw's allegation that he is not a satirist, or consent to appear before the readers of this book as one who had not thought of including in a book on satire any work of the foremost satirist of the age. In the life of Shaw by his semiofficial biographer, Archibald Henderson, there is an extended comparison between Shaw and Molière as satirists, and a discussion of Shaw's relationship to the tradition of satire up to his own time; Henderson adds in a footnote that in all this he has been "acting as Shaw's amanuensis, for this is his own analysis as personally communicated to me." Evidently, at that time, Mr. Shaw did believe himself a satirist.

These remarks have been made simply by way of explanation, and are not intended in any way as derogation of G. B. S. The editor would have rejoiced to include a long selection from the works of this superb artist in addition to the critical essay which follows. Meanwhile he desires to express his respect and admiration, and his abiding gratitude for the creative inspiration of a great career, all the way from the days of Corno di Bassetto to the present time, when Shaw has just passed his eighty-eighth birthday.

INTELLECTUAL IRRITANT AND PHILOSOPHER-POET

BY THE EDITOR

Like Dickens, only even more insistently than Dickens, Shaw is a social satirist. But Dickens crusaded against the evils of the nineteenth century like a bull stamping and goring in his rage; Shaw, by contrast, must be seen as the *torero*. Where Dickens rushed headlong on the hated foe, Shaw remains agile and self-possessed in the center of the arena. Where Dickens grows hot and angry, Shaw is icicle-cool. Icicle-glittering, too, with a cerebral wit like sun upon a glacier. Its light, however, is no reflection from a frozen waste, but the play of a clear and darting mind, delighting in its dominance and ease. Proudly it places its *banderillas*, hardly seeming to stir; there is a flurry of red cloak and the plunging victim is then ready to be teased, maddened, manipulated again, ultimately worn down and dispatched, always with serene control and style.

Shaw has spent a lifetime goading the bull of respectable public opinion, but the comparison with Dickens was no mere excuse for our metaphor. Dickens is a part of Shaw's artistic ancestry. There is much Dickens in his comic figures: Enry Straker, for example, the Cockney chauffeur of *Man and Superman;* Candida's father, Burgess, with his low cunning and whining, sanctimonious cant; William, the comic waiter of *You Never Can Tell;* and Doolittle, the philosophical dustman in *Pygmalion.* When the last two of these are on the stage Sam Weller is never far off in the wings. Even Shaw's naming of characters often reminds us of Dickens—Smilash, Aloysius Brollikens, Lickcheese, Sir Fuller Eastwind, Sir Dexter Rightside (compare Noodle, Mrs. Jellyby, Lord Frederic Verisopht, Sir Leicester Dedlock). Like Dickens, too, Shaw is fond of slapstick and knockabout farce, such as Edstaston being tickled by the Empress of Russia in *Great Catherine*, and the comic pantomime lion of *Androcles*. But burlesque with Shaw is a subordinate device, partly mere high jinks and partly coating for his didactic pills.

For the truth is, of course, that Shaw has always been an intellectual moralist assaulting the public with a steady stream of arguments, whether they were poured forth as reviews, novels, pamphlets, plays, or torrential prefaces. Argument, conducted with all the acumen of a born debater, and

sometimes with the tricky ingenuity of a skilled casuist, has been the staple of his attack. And that attack has been direct and undisguised, escaping reprisal only by a mingling of insolence, high spirits, wit, and flashing paradox that has often led to his being mistaken for a playboy with mental fireworks. The technique of satiric argument is thus brilliantly exemplified in Shaw, both because he illustrates it so purely and because he employs it in so many forms—essay, narrative, Socratic dialogue, oration, symposium, drama In Shaw's formal versatility he is certainly the Voltaire of our age. And, like Voltaire, he is also its foremost casuist.

"No man," Baron Guilford was fond of observing, "could be a good lawyer that was not a put-case." This is a definition of casuistry, for casuistry consists of nothing else but the invention and posing of cases to prove a point It also defines the essential method of most argument in satire; every satiric fiction implicitly strives to bring home to its victims the indictment *De te fabula*. Whether or not the "argument" posed by the choice of cases is casuistical in the narrower, reproachful sense of the word depends upon the degree to which sophistical manipulation is involved. What is true of the whole is true of its parts, each individual section puts a part of the case which stands or falls in terms not only of its own apparent integrity but of its relationship to the whole.

All satire is thus, from one point of view, a kind of argument, an endeavor to convince by chosen instances, although often enough it remains merely argument by assertion. On occasion, however, it adopts the specific devices of argumentation, driving through to a conclusion, sometimes even debating and endeavoring to batter down the opposition. Such satire purports to make its appeal to reason rather than to primitive feeling. It marshals evidence, invokes a process of proof. The satirist becomes a dialectician, his satire a kind of polemic. Shaw is outstanding among satirists who have relied upon such methods.

No satirist, of course, not even Shaw, uses argument as his only weapon. But many who appear in this book have used it heavily: Aldous Huxley, Samuel Butler, Thorstein Veblen, and many others, such as Thomas Love Peacock, Lewis Carroll, and Aristophanes, pepper their victims with constant arrow flights of argument. Shaw's prefaces and pamphlets show how satire can be diffused throughout an entire argument and how ridicule can be built into a series of miniature climaxes His best plays embody conflicting attitudes and philosophies, and use their clash to highlight now one and now another aspect of a complex situation His wit is not verbal or even a succession of local lightning flashes, it bathes the entire scene in intellectual surprises, dialectical defeats, and startling argumentative victories; they are structures of musical logic built with superb craftsmanship.

They integrate thought and feeling, proving that the crucial question for all technique is: technique to what end? The harmony between what Shaw has to say and his means of saying it sets him high among literary artists.

Let us examine a paragraph from the preface to *Saint Joan:*

"Our credulity, though enormous, is not boundless, and our stock of it is quite used up by our mediums, clairvoyants, hand readers, slate writers, Christian Scientists, psychoanalysts, electronic vibration diviners, therapeutists of all schools, registered and unregistered, astrologers, astronomers who tell us that the sun is nearly a hundred million miles away and that Betelgeuse is ten times as big as the whole universe, physicists who balance Betelgeuse by describing the incredible smallness of the atom, and a host of other marvel mongers whose credulity would have dissolved the Middle Ages in a roar of sceptical merriment. In the Middle Ages people believed that the earth was flat, for which they had at least the evidence of their senses: we believe it to be round, not because as many as one per cent of us could give the physical reasons for so quaint a belief, but because modern science has convinced us that nothing that is obvious is true, and that everything that is magical, improbable, extraordinary, gigantic, microscopic, heartless, or outrageous is scientific."

It would be hard to overpraise the wit and skill of this, the long but swift oratorical clauses effortlessly scooping up so many details in their course, ingeniously maneuvering a host of contemporary credulities into such prominence that our claims to skepticism collapse in feeble ruin, no less ingeniously carrying with their weight a number of other modern concepts in which Shaw seeks to weaken our faith, and finally exploding in a spectacular antithesis that has the effect of a crackling epigrammatic whip. How much, by sheer virtuosity and joy in destruction, has Shaw persuaded us to swallow here, of which we might otherwise have been dubious?

He begins with a core of indubitable fact. None except their votaries will deny him the astrologers, palmists, mediums, clairvoyants, and Christian Science faith healers. Then, slyly inserted among these, come others, more disturbing to our complacency. We laughed very willingly at those foolish enough to believe in the slate writers and "electric vibration diviners," but are we sure that we can draw the dividing line between fashionable medical quacks and legitimate practitioners? that we know how much is science and how much is hocus-pocus in psychoanalysis? When he attacks our faith in the infinitesimal world of the electron and the light-years between the stars, we may begin to smile; surely it's all a joke! surely these are respectable, not credulous, beliefs! Incredible to suppose a conspiracy among so many scientific students of unimpeachable integrity. But all the greatest doctors

and authorities of the day, Shaw responds, gave the medieval man equally good reason for believing in angels and witchcraft. But our mechanical inventions, we protest; the telephone, the radio! And Shaw cruelly replies, could *you yourself make the faintest stab at showing how they employ* the scientific principles you believe them to prove? And, if not, what claim *have you to anything but faith?*

Shaw does not, of course, mean that there is no foundation for the statements made by scientists. He is merely showing that the average man flatters himself if he believes that he is enlightened and skeptical. He lives in a world of intellectual wonders without being much less of an ignorant fool than his ancestors. In a single paragraph, then, Shaw has swung us through a great circle of reactions. We began with a patronizing giggle at our mental inferiors, then laughed at Shaw for throwing out a wild paradox to tickle us, and then, suddenly, found ourselves bumped down off our pedestal of imagined superiority.

Shaw's denial of received opinion was not a piece of intellectual clowning, but the simple truth in fantastic guise. And this is the prevailing characteristic of Shaw's wit. It is the prevailing characteristic, in fact, of all wit, which is pre-eminently a sane revelation of reality. Nothing, then, could be further from the truth than Max Beerbohm's caricature of Shaw standing on his head and exclaiming how ridiculous the world looks from that angle. It is conventional muddle that is really standing on its head.

Shaw's achievement, technically, in his pamphlets and prefaces, is that by remarkable ingenuity in construction, he is able to arrange his argument in a continuous sequence of reversal, surprise, paradox, and witty *reductio ad absurdum.* Through a barrage of lively humor, browbeating, exaggeration, and abuse, he pushes on his objectives with a steady penetration and sanity, and with such infectious high spirits and freedom from malice that even when he is being most outrageous the reader finds himself taken captive. Observe, for example, how in the paragraph immediately following the one we have analyzed, under the pretense of taking back some of it, he then makes his attack even more sweeping

"I must not, by the way, be taken as implying that the earth is flat, or that all or any of our amazing credulities are delusions or impostures. I am only defending my own age against the charge of being less imaginative than the Middle Ages. I affirm that the nineteenth century, and still more the twentieth, can knock the fifteenth into a cocked hat in point of susceptibility to marvels and miracles and saints and prophets and magicians and monsters and fairy tales of all kinds. The proportion of marvel to immediately credible statement in the latest edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is enormously

greater than in the Bible. The medieval doctors of divinity who did not pretend to settle how many angels could dance on the point of a needle cut a very poor figure as far as credulity is concerned beside the modern physicists who have settled to the billionth of a millimetre every movement and position in the dance of the electrons. Not for worlds would I question the precise accuracy of these calculations or the existence of electrons (whatever they may be). The fate of Joan is a warning to me against such heresy. But why the men who believe in electrons should regard themselves as less credulous than the men who believed in angels is not apparent to me."

The mingling of jest, seriousness, hyperbole, common sense, irony, and cheek in this passage adds up to a heady intoxication that does much to explain the secret of Shaw's charm. Gaily smashing through the barriers of so many conventional beliefs and restrictions, making ridiculous the guardians of so many intellectual as well as moral respectabilities, he appeals to a hidden chafing against restraint within us and offers us the freedom and exhilaration of a wider and less hidebound world. If it then turns out that we have not merely been kicking up our heels in an irresponsible canter, but that this freer world is saner too, what wonder that Shaw is able to cajole, push, swear, and convince us into more than we had ever conceived possible?

Shaw is an expert at hoisting the enemy with his own petard. It is still a pleasure to read his essay, *The Sanity of Art*, demolishing Nordau's argument that modern art—the art of Ibsen, Wagner, and Monet—was a form of degenerate lunacy and its practitioners were the victims of various phobias and manias. There is one amusing example of the *tu quoque:* Let us summon Nordau himself, Shaw suggests, "before the looking-glass," and ask him whether "he can pick out a crank more hopelessly obsessed with one idea than himself."

"If you want an example of echolalia, can you find a more shocking one than this gentleman who, when you say 'mania,' immediately begins to gabble Egomania, Graphomania, Megalomania, Onomatomania, Pyromania, Kleptomania, Dipsomania, Erotomania, Arithmomania, Oniomania, and is started off by the termination 'phobia' with a string of Agoraphobia, Claustrophobia, Rupophobia, Iophobia, Nosophobia, Aichnophobia, Belenophobia, Cremnophobia, and Trichophobia? After which he suddenly observes: 'This is simply philologico-medical trifling,' a remark which looks like returning sanity until he follows it up by clasping his temples in the true bedlamite manner, and complaining that 'psychiatry is being stuffed with useless and disturbing designations,' whereas, if the psychiatrists

would only listen to him, they would see that there is only one phobia and one mania: namely, degeneration. That is, the philologico-medical triflers are not crazy enough for him."

It is noteworthy that Shaw often employs a technique very similar to that of these long harangues in his plays. The action may have been broad farce, brisk repartee, or sharp intellectual conflict, but again and again at a certain stage, as the issues clarify themselves, one of the characters rises to a long speech of musical eloquence. There are Don Juan, the Devil, and the Commander, in *Man and Superman*, with their increasingly patterned counterpoint soaring to Don Juan's Life-Force speech, the Inquisitor's magnificent oration in *Saint Joan*; the King's speech to his Cabinet, in *The Apple Cart:* "I stand for the great abstractions: for conscience and virtue; for the eternal against the expedient, for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony", the melancholy valedictory of the preacher-burglar in *Too True to Be Good*, while the rising fog thickens round him from the sea. "All I know is that I must find the way of life, for myself and all of us, or we shall surely perish. And meanwhile my gift has possession of me. I must preach and preach no matter how late the hour and how short the day. . . ."

The comparison of these great set pieces to musical compositions was not accidental. Einstein remarks that Shaw's plays are like Mozart's music; and Shaw himself insists that he learned his art not from the writers but the composers· "My masters were the masters of a universal language; they were, to go from summit to summit, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner." How revealingly the development of an entire act in one of Shaw's plays may be analyzed in terms of musical structure is shown by Edmund Wilson's discussion of the orchestration of the first act in *The Apple Cart*. That delightful operatic extravaganza, *Arms and the Man*, achieves the same result in the clear thematic contrast between the Byronesque heroics of Sergius and the good-humoredly ironic deflations of Bluntschli.

In other plays one instrument is played off against the others, or a whole series is made to develop characteristic variations on a single theme, or all state their own themes, which are then developed and amplified in conflict. *Saint Joan* is a beautiful illustration of this triumphant technique. There is not only the penetrating scene in Warwick's tent where Cauchon gives the name of Nationalism to Joan's secular heresy, against which the great King-Maker is fighting, and Warwick finds the name of Protestantism to label the religious aspect of her radicalism, against which his ecclesiastical guest is pitted, there is the even more wonderful scene at Joan's trial, with the Inquisitor giving a superb defense of the institution he represents, while

at the same time Cauchon, Stogumber, Courcelles, Estivet, and Ladvenu provide shadings and overtones by sounding other chords.

"This music," Wilson concludes, "is a music of ideas—or rather, perhaps, it is a music of moralities. Bernard Shaw is a writer of the same kind as Plato." He is indeed, and if with Plato he sometimes makes his other characters nothing more than foils to his intellectual hero, even oftener he rises like Plato to a philosophic drama in which points of view are given life and brought into genuine conflict with each other, in which the excitement is that of a keen and revelatory dialectic. At its best the intellectual movement is constant and widens over a broadening field of illumination. If in *Man and Superman* Octavius, Ramsden, and Malone are dummies to be disposed of by Tanner's verbal jujitsu, and the bandit Mendoza an operatic prig, the symposium of the Dream-Scene is genuine, and the Commandant, Ana, and the Devil are not mere setups for Don Juan. Although Shaw makes a ludicrous figure of Tom Broadbent, the conflict of *John Bull's Other Island* is real, and so is that between Major Barbara and Andrew Undershaft, and that in the symbolism of *Heartbreak House*, where Captain Shotover voices their antagonism to the Boss Mangans of the world: "We must win powers of life and death over them. . . . There is enmity between our seed and their seed. . . . We kill the better half of ourselves every day to propitiate them."

Shaw's strength, also like Plato's, lies not merely in his wit and felicity of language or the structural symmetry with which he develops his themes, but in the central harmony of his thought. His entire career has been a search for a philosophy that might provide a foundation both for understanding and action in modern society, essentially a religious search for the emotional forces behind intelligent action. All the resources of his art have been for Shaw only an instrument of that purpose: "for art's sake alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence." Indeed, for Shaw, he himself is only an instrument: "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap, the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

"There is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good for the world." So, Keats, and Shaw's manifesto is a ringing affirmation of the same thought. But the great inspiration of Shaw's earlier career was not the poets, not even Shelley or William Morris, but Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* and Marx's *Das Kapital*. "Karl Marx," he said, "made a man of me", and although he has not adhered to a rigorous Marxism, he has never foregone its illuminations. Sidney Trefusis, the hero of *An Unsocial Socialist*,

shows his guests photographs of his town house and country estate, his magnificent library, his formal gardens, the paintings in his art gallery, and just as they are uneasily thinking to themselves how vulgar he is to be boasting of his possessions, produces photographs of the sweatshops and industrial slums from which his and their wealth is derived. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is an analysis of the social causes of prostitution. "The notion that prostitution is created by the wickedness of Mrs. Warren is as silly as the notion—prevalent, nevertheless, to some extent in Temperance circles—that drunkenness is created by the wickedness of the publican." *Widowers' Houses* shows "that slums are the product, not of individual Harpagons, but of the indifference of young gentlemen to the condition of the city they live in, provided they live at the west end of it on money earned by somebody else's labor."

Shaw's illumination of society's economic foundations comes to its climax in *Major Barbara* with the Gospel of Andrew Undershaft. The dialogue between Undershaft and Cusins in the Salvation Army shelter, the almost immediately following dialogue between Undershaft and Mrs. Baines, make it plain how the financial interests typified by Undershaft and Bodger use the Church and use the Army to keep down discontent and forestall revolution. Undershaft insists that a sufficient income is the first prerequisite to a decent and fruitful life. The clichés about wealthy sinners and honest poverty are destructive nonsense, poverty *causes* dirt, disease, death, crime, cruelty, and suffering. It is society's first duty to abolish poverty. "I wouldn't have your conscience," Peter Shirley, the discharged fitter, tells the millionaire munitions-maker, "not for all your income." "I wouldn't have your income," Undershaft rejoins, "not for all your conscience."

Men will become better when they force their fellow men to let them live better. "Have you ever been in love with Poverty, like St. Francis?" Undershaft asks sardonically. "Have you ever been in love with Dirt, like St. Simeon? Have you ever been in love with disease and suffering, like our nurses and philanthropists?" And he concludes scornfully, "Leave it to the poor to pretend that poverty is a blessing leave it to the coward to make a religion of cowardice by preaching humility." *Major Barbara* is a reverberating attack upon a state of society that perpetuates conditions spawning "millions of poor people, abject people, dirty people, ill fed, ill clothed people." It poisons everything: poisons the poor with misery, fear, envy, rebellion, and criminality; poisons their financial superiors, Undershaft points out, "by forcing us to do away with our own liberties and to organize unnatural cruelties for fear they should rise against us and drag us down into their abyss"

The economic themes of *Major Barbara* become less obvious in later

plays; they do not disappear. *Heartbreak House* "is cultured, leisured Europe before the War," and in it every character corresponds to part of a symbolic social analysis. Captain Shotover, once merchant, adventurer, pirate, and imperialist, represents the British tradition since the time of Drake and Raleigh. He is the energy that seized the Americas, India, Australia. But now, drunk and half crazy, in a house built in the form of a ship (symbolic of Britannia ruling the waves, symbolic of the mercantile sources of England's wealth), he is grown feeble and senescent. The present generation spends its energies in gossip, scandal, novel reading, game shooting, art, music, snobbery, love-making, and ennui; it is too disillusioned to believe in anything and too fond of luxury and too undisciplined to work for anything. Those who still cultivate a sense of responsibility (Lady Utterword and "Horseback Hall") are too tied up in the traditions of caste, riding to hounds, and the playing fields of Eton to make their administration of England's colonial empire anything but a blunder and a waste. Mazzini Dunn represents what is left of nineteenth-century liberalism, pallid, well meaning, and washed out, shrunk to a cat's-paw of finance capitalism, symbolized in Boss Mangan, whose factories he manages and whose workmen he conciliates His daughter, Ellie Dunn, is the younger generation. But, unlike Ibsen's Nora or Hilda Wangel, she will *slam no doors nor knock at* them with high impossible demands. She is a daughter of the jazz age, lacking in all faith and certainty, sick with a halfhearted selfish romanticism turned toward the matinée-idol profile of the dashing Hector Hushabye, and at the same time gnawed by an incipient cynicism that will allow her to sell herself in matrimony to the fat and middle-aged Mangan.

It is emptiness of faith that runs through the world Shaw is here depicting, and it is a faith that may give man an unselfish and intelligent purpose that Shaw has spent his life in seeking. *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah* are efforts to find that faith in a doctrine of evolution striving toward a form of life that will be self-understanding and self-directing, not the mere creatures of chance. "Were I not possessed with a purpose beyond *my own* I had better be a ploughman than a philosopher; for the ploughman lives as long as the philosopher, eats more, sleeps better, and rejoices in the wife of his bosom with less misgiving." But to the philosopher the Life-Force says: "I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following *the line of least resistance*: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain—a philosopher's brain—to grasp this knowledge for me. . . . And this thou must strive to do until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to *carry on the work*."

This is the ringing clarity of Shaw's prime. Its value and courage are

not lessened by the fact that in our distraught world of today Shaw's weakening powers are reflected in the troubled questionings, despair, and doubt of *Too True to Be Good* and *On the Rocks*. It may be desirable, however, to defend Shaw's central consistency against the vigorous criticism of Edmund Wilson, who feels that even in the richest and most vital part of Shaw's career there is, despite all the clearness in individual pronouncements, a certain blurring and confusion of thought. There is a vein of everyday common-sense practicality in Shaw, Wilson argues, that conflicts with the socialist vision of a reorganized society, and beyond the socialist scheme of ideal values, in turn, Shaw the poet-philosopher "commands a longer view of life *sub specie aeternitatis* and . . . allows himself many doubts which neither the socialist nor the bourgeois citizen can admit." Out of these conflicts comes Shaw's gift of identifying himself, as playwright, with contrary emotions and points of view, but out of them also come inward contradictions that muddle his position.

There are, of course, contradictory utterances in Shaw, as there are in anybody who writes and talks much But in the main his position is transparently consistent and clear; and what seem to Wilson contradictions are only the careful warnings with which an intelligent man must qualify most absolute statements. The moralist denounces marriage, but advises young people to conform, true, but he is striving to induce thought that may lead to a change in social *mores* and at the same time to caution those who have no vocation for rebellion or sainthood that the field of action is probably not for them. The political observer points out that we cannot dismiss the dictators as tricky madmen predestined to failure—and surely, by now, it must be clear that not all our horror of Hitler can dispose of him by calling him, as Wilson does, "merely a crazy Austrian." Shaw's remarks on Mussolini and Hitler, and on Lenin and Stalin, have the force of bidding the democracies look to their course lest they perish Nor is there contradiction in having a reform program for the present that one does not regard as binding for all future time. So sane a thinker as John Stuart Mill came to feel representative democracy not as an absolute principle but as a political instrument without being any less "a radical and a democrat for Europe, and especially for England," in his own time.

Shaw's ultimate vision of the boundless possibilities of human expansion, his ideal of sanity, orderliness, and a rational fullness in life, are unified, passionate, and clear. If he is open to criticism, it is rather for a certain thin, cerebral quality, especially noticeable in the sexless flavor of his delineation of love between men and women. Trotsky hit this off when he wished, in a passage quoted by Wilson, that "the Fabian fluid that ran in [his] veins" might have been "strengthened by even so much as five per cent of the

blood of Jonathan Swift." * Not that there is no indignation or scorn in Shaw. He has none of Swift's macabre bitterness, however, because he lives more purely in the mind than Swift and because he has been filled with boundless confidence.

Shaw has been one of the great intellectual irritants of our day. His satire has been a sword cutting through innumerable thick swaddlings of convention. His iconoclastic arguments and the glitter of their logic have for over a generation been clearing minds of their confusion, raising in the most dazzling form the most vital questions. People no longer "raise the fool's cry of paradox" when Shaw takes "hold of a stick by the right instead of the wrong end." And it is neither his verbal wit nor his charm that has given his arguments and questions force. That force lies in the core of values they have consistently maintained.

* Edwin Arlington Robinson touches on the same point when he complains in a letter that Shaw is a mixture of "red rags and white corpuscles."

IRONIC SKEPTICISM IN ANATOLE FRANCE



THE IRONIST habitually sees the contrast between man's vainglorious pretensions and his petty actuality, between his feebleness and the vast forces he contends with. Verbal irony says less than it means, just as philosophic irony sees the universe saying less to our understandings than it means. The verbal form may be a mere playful trick, but when verbal irony is suffused with philosophic irony it becomes a cold compress to swollen heads. It marks the paucity of brain behind some noble eminence of brow, and dissolves the golden mask that hides that brazen greed of conquest The farthest ranges of irony are cosmic, dwindling pyramids to pillars of snow and man to a squeaking midget beneath the stars

Anatole France specializes in these cosmic ironies. He is forever fascinated by the irony of man's pretensions and his fate. It is this constant attitude, rather than any trick of words, that gives his satire its constant flavor Not that he is sparing of verbal irony. "Remember, my son, never to give faith to absurdities, but to submit all things to your reason, except, always, of course, such as pertain to our holy religion." "To make of woman the terrible marvel that she is today, the indifferent and sovereign

cause of sacrifices and crimes, two things were needed: civilization, which gave her veils, and religion, which gave us scruples." But the verbal irony is only an embroidery on France's constant theme of the contrast between what man imagines himself and what he really is.

It is a theme that is the consummate flower of a long tradition of skepticism. It runs back to Montaigne's "Que sçais-je," his endeavor to escape from a mere blind acceptance of received opinion; it includes the withering penetration of La Rochefoucauld, the shining clarity of Fontenelle, the saltiness of Voltaire, the humane urbanity of Renan. It is aware of its rich background, of its roots in an assured scheme of values, and therefore it can afford to smile at raw enthusiasms and rash panaceas. It is neither angry nor puffed with iconoclastic zeal, its wisdom is an old wisdom that knows men will not listen nor understand nor change.

The institutions, ambitions, faiths, and ideals of the mass of men such a skepticism can regard only with a teasing laughter. Do most men assume that those who crossed the path of Jesus must have been at least deeply impressed by that great figure? That assumption France answers by showing Pontius Pilate in old age conversing with a friend; amid Pilate's memories of the tumultuous contentions of the Jews, and his friend's reminiscences of rouged and scented courtesans, the name of "a young Galilean miracle worker" is mentioned. "Pontius Pilate knit his brow and carried his hand to his forehead like one who searches his memory." "'Jesus?' he murmured. 'Jesus the Nazarene? I don't recall the name.'"

Such reversals of conventional assumptions France is coolly ready to apply to every age—to fifth-century Alexandria with Thaïs, *to the eighteenth century with the Abbé Jérome Coignard, to the French Revolution in* The Gods Are Athirst, *and to the nineteenth century in the several volumes of his* Contemporary History. *The same process he universalizes in* Penguin Island, *unmasking man's grotesque delusions about civilization, progress, religion, patriotism, and glory. But the two forms are only the concrete and the abstract of the same smiling destruction. Both are one with the Lucretian precepts of a lifetime.*

Penguin Island *is the supreme achievement of France's satiric bent, the one of all his works in which form and material are most intimately fused. The doctrine it deflates being a doctrine of history, France's satire felicitously burlesques the very form of history, the style and subject matter of the historian. The imitation history of an invention far better fitted than the rapid-motion travelogue of Voltaire's* Candide *to survey the follies,*

vices, and sufferings of humanity. It enables France to leave out as irrelevant all private and humble virtue, to concentrate on public evils, political catastrophes, and large-scale misfortunes The primitive Penguins braining each other with clubs are accomplishing, we are gravely assured, "the most august of functions": "They are creating law, they are founding property, they are establishing the principles of civilization, the foundations of society, and the bases of the State." "Their work will be consecrated through the centuries by jurists, protected and confirmed by magistrates"

Monastic learning, medieval chivalry, Renaissance ambitions, the French Revolution, Napoleonic imperialism, royalist plots, anti-Semitism, industrialism, and the corruptions of parliamentary democracy and finance capitalism are seen with the same withering gaze. Future times grow ever more industrial and urbanized. Buildings soar into the soot-blackened air Bodies are enfeebled by specialization, racked by industrial diseases There develops what "anthropologists call the millionaire-type," "ascetics of riches" who do nothing but press buttons and manipulate the mystic symbols of a wealth they never see: idealists contemplating the theoretic possibility of satisfying desires they never feel. "This city deserves to perish," says an electro-chemist; and blows it up with radium bombs exploded by wireless. Detonations everywhere destroy civilization; the world lapses into barbarism. Gradually hunters begin again to chase wild animals once more roaming the hills, flocks browse, agriculture is rediscovered. Villages become towns. Buildings soar into the sky. Millions work in the giant cities. . . .

Such is France's conclusion on the doctrine of progress an ironical movement of circular futility. All is accomplished, however, with the utmost of indirection, an elaborate avoidance of straightforward assertion. Nowhere does France voice these implications as his own opinions. In the preface he quotes advice he pretends to have received from a fellow historian "If you wish your book to be well received, neglect no opportunity for exalting the virtues upon which societies are grounded devotion to wealth, pious sentiments, and especially the resignation of the poor, which is the foundation of order. Affirm, sir, that the origins of property, of nobility, and of the police power will be treated in your book with all the respect that these institutions deserve. Let it be known that you admit the supernatural when it presents itself. On these conditions, you will succeed in good company." "I have meditated on these judicious observations," France adds innocently, "and have adhered strictly to them."

This appearance of innocence no satirist more consistently maintains How demurely France apes the impartiality of the "scientific" historian, imperturbably setting down monstrosities, and detailing horrors with enormous sang-froid! How careful he is that any condemnation be voiced only by some naïve soul whose distress is treated with derision by a man of the world! How ingeniously he plants in the unconscious mouths of the knowing and the lordly the very words that give them away! "Although immutable by essence," declares the Lord in Paradise, "in proportion as I endure I incline to mildness. This change of character is apparent to those who read my two testaments." Even more lethally ironic are Greatauk's comments on the mountain of "proofs" his subordinate Panther has amassed against the Jew, Pyrot: "It is good to have proofs, but it is better not to have any. . . . As I gave it to you, the Pyrot case did not lend itself to criticism. . . . It defied attack; it was invulnerable because it was invisible. . . . I advise you, Panther, to use your papers with restraint."

The pure in heart, in Penguin Island, are never triumphant. The blameless astronomer Bidault-Coquille plunges into the struggle for social justice only to emerge battered and disillusioned· he has proved nothing, he says to himself in the end, but his own imprudence, ignorance of human nature, and lack of "experimental philosophy." The little, if any, good he has accomplished seems pitifully disproportioned to the toil and heartache that went into it.

It would be an error, however, to assume that these conclusions implied either ethical anarchy or indifference. France had himself denounced the persecution of Dreyfus, stood shoulder to shoulder with the socialists, made speeches and been pelted with decayed vegetables on street corners. And never does he entirely repudiate such action: little as it can do to stem the flood of evil and folly, one cannot feel and harden one's heart. But before the tragicomedy of man, mirth is better than tears or rage. With laughing sadness, with sympathetic scorn, France tells us that men are incorrigible. And thereby he makes us apologists for those ideals in terms of which he has urbanely condemned humanity. If it is a part of wisdom not to let the heart grow bitter over what cannot be helped, wisdom also means the rule of sound reason, moderation, justice, and love· those very virtues that man so constantly betrays in cruel and stupid ways.

PENGUIN ISLAND

*** *Penguin Island* was first published in 1909. The extracts given here are Book II, Chapter 1, "The First Clothes," and Book III, Chapter 3, "The Journey of Dr. Obnubile" ***

The Monk Magis Drapes a Virgin's Charms

ONE DAY St. Mael was sitting by the seashore on a warm stone that he found. He thought it had been warmed by the sun and he gave thanks to God for it, not knowing that the Devil had been resting on it. The apostle was waiting for the monks of Yvern who had been commissioned to bring a freight of skins and fabrics to clothe the inhabitants of the island of Alca.

Soon he saw a monk called Magis coming ashore and carrying a chest upon his back. This monk enjoyed a great reputation for holiness.

When he had drawn near to the old man he laid the chest on the ground and wiping his forehead with the back of his sleeve, he said:

"Well, father, you wish then to clothe these penguins?"

"Nothing is more needful, my son," said the old man. "Since they have been incorporated into the family of Abraham these penguins share the curse of Eve, and they know that they are naked, a thing of which they were ignorant before. And it is high time to clothe them, for they are losing the down that remained on them after their metamorphosis."

"It is true," said Magis as he cast his eyes over the coast where the penguins were to be seen looking for shrimps, gathering mussels, singing, or sleeping, "they are naked. But do you not think, father, that it would be better to leave them naked? Why clothe them? When they wear clothes and are under the moral law they will assume an immense pride, a vile hypocrisy, and an excessive cruelty."

"Is it possible, my son," sighed the old man, "that you understand so badly the effects of the moral law to which even the heathen submit?"

"The moral law," answered Magis, "forces men who are beasts to live otherwise than beasts, a thing that doubtless puts a constraint upon them, but that also flatters and reassures them; and as they are proud, cowardly, and covetous of pleasure, they willingly submit to restraints that tickle their vanity and on which they found both their present security and the hope of their future happiness. That is the principle of all morality. . . . But let us

not mislead ourselves. My companions are unloading their cargo of stuffs and skins on the island. Think, father, while there is still time! To clothe the penguins is a very serious business. At present when a penguin desires a penguin he knows precisely what he desires and his lust is limited by an exact knowledge of its object. At this moment two or three couples of penguins are making love on the beach. See with what simplicity! No one pays any attention and the actors themselves do not seem to be greatly preoccupied. But when the female penguins are clothed, the male penguin will not form so exact a notion of what it is that attracts him to them His indeterminate desires will fly out into all sorts of dreams and illusions; in short, father, he will know love and its mad torments. And all the time the female penguins will cast down their eyes and bite their lips, and take on airs as if they kept a treasure under their clothes! . . . what a pity!

"The evil will be endurable as long as these people remain rude and poor; but only wait for a thousand years and you will see, father, with what powerful weapons you have endowed the daughters of Alca. If you will allow me, I can give you some idea of it beforehand. I have some old clothes in this chest. Let us take at hazard one of these female penguins to whom the male penguins give such little thought, and let us dress her as well as we can.

"Here is one coming towards us. She is neither more beautiful nor uglier than the others, she is young. No one looks at her. She strolls indolently along the shore, scratching her back and with her finger at her nose as she walks. You cannot help seeing, father, that she has narrow shoulders, clumsy breasts, a stout figure, and short legs. Her reddish knees pucker at every step she takes, and there is, at each of her joints, what looks like a little monkey's head. Her broad and sinewy feet cling to the rock with their four crooked toes, while the great toes stick up like the heads of two cunning serpents. She begins to walk, all her muscles are engaged in the task, and, when we see them working, we think of her as a machine intended for walking rather than as a machine intended for making love, although visibly she is both, and contains within herself several other pieces of machinery besides. Well, venerable apostle, you will see what I am going to make of her."

With these words the monk, Magis, reached the female penguin in three bounds, lifted her up, carried her in his arms with her hair trailing behind her, and threw her, overcome with fright, at the feet of the holy Mael.

And whilst she wept and begged them to do her no harm, he took a pair of sandals out of his chest and commanded her to put them on.

"Her feet," observed the old man, "will appear smaller when squeezed in by the woollen cords. The soles, being two fingers high, will give an elegant length to her legs and the weight they bear will seem magnified."

As the penguin tied on her sandals she threw a curious look towards the open coffer, and seeing that it was full of jewels and finery, she smiled through her tears.

The monk twisted her hair on the back of her head and covered it with a chaplet of flowers. He encircled her wrist with golden bracelets and making her stand upright, he passed a large linen band beneath her breasts, alleging that her bosom would thereby derive a new dignity and that her sides would be compressed to the greater glory of her hips.

He fixed this band with pins, taking them one by one out of his mouth.

"You can tighten it still more," said the penguin.

When he had, with much care and study, enclosed the soft parts of her bust in this way, he covered her whole body with a rose-coloured tunic which gently followed the lines of her figure.

"Does it hang well?" asked the penguin.

And bending forward with her head on one side and her chin on her shoulder, she kept looking attentively at the appearance of her toilet

Magis asked her if she did not think the dress a little long, but she answered with assurance that it was not--she would hold it up.

Immediately, taking the back of her skirt in her left hand, she drew it obliquely across her hips, taking care to disclose a glimpse of her heels. Then she went away, walking with short steps and swinging her hips.

She did not turn her head, but as she passed near a stream she glanced out of the corner of her eye at her own reflection.

A male penguin, who met her by chance, stopped in surprise, and retracing his steps began to follow her. As she went along the shore, others coming back from fishing went up to her, and after looking at her, walked behind her. Those who were lying on the sand got up and joined the rest.

Unceasingly, as she advanced, fresh penguins, descending from the paths of the mountain, coming out of clefts of the rocks, and emerging from the water, added to the size of her retinue.

And all of them, men of ripe age with vigorous shoulders and hairy breasts, agile youths, old men shaking the multitudinous wrinkles of their rosy and white-haired skins, or dragging their legs thinner and drier than the juniper staff that served them as a third leg, hurried on, panting and emitting an acrid odour and hoarse gasps. Yet she went on peacefully and seemed to see nothing.

"Father," cried Magis, "notice how each one advances with his nose pointed towards the centre of gravity of that young damsel now that the centre is covered by a garment The sphere inspires the meditations of geometers by the number of its properties. When it proceeds from a physical and living nature it acquires new qualities, and in order that the interest

of that figure might be fully revealed to the penguins it was necessary that, ceasing to see it distinctly with their eyes, they should be led to represent it to themselves in their minds. I myself feel at this moment irresistibly attracted towards that penguin. Whether it be because her skirt gives more importance to her hips, and that in its simple magnificence it invests them with a synthetic and general character and allows only the pure idea, the divine principle, of them to be seen, whether this be the cause I cannot say, but I feel that if I embraced her I would hold in my hands the heaven of human pleasure. It is certain that modesty communicates an invincible attraction to women. My uneasiness is so great that it would be vain for me to try to conceal it."

He spoke, and, gathering up his habit, he rushed among the crowd of penguins, pushing, jostling, trampling, and crushing, until he reached the daughter of Alca, whom he seized and suddenly carried in his arms into a cave that had been hollowed out by the sea.

Then the penguins felt as if the sun had gone out. And the holy Maël knew that the Devil had taken the features of the monk, Magis, in order that he might give clothes to the daughter of Alca. He was troubled in spirit, and his soul was sad. As with slow steps he went towards his hermitage he saw the little penguins of six and seven years of age tightening their waists with belts made of sea-weed and walking along the shore to see if anybody would follow them.

Dr. Obnubile Visits New Atlantis

After a succession of amazing vicissitudes, the memory of which is in great part lost by the wrongs of time and the bad style of historians, the Penguins established the government of the Penguins by themselves. They elected a diet or assembly, and invested it with the privilege of naming the Head of the State. The latter, chosen from among the simple Penguins, wore no formidable monster's crest upon his head and exercised no absolute authority over the people. He was himself subject to the laws of the nation. He was not given the title of king, and no ordinal number followed his name. He bore such names as Paturle, Janvion, Truffaldin, Coquenhot, and Bredouille. These magistrates did not make war. They were not suited for that.

The new state received the name of Public Thing or Republic. Its partisans were called republicanists or republicans. They were also named Thingmongers and sometimes Scamps, but this latter name was taken in ill part.

The Penguin democracy did not itself govern. It obeyed a financial oligarchy which formed opinion by means of the newspapers, and held in its hands the representatives, the ministers, and the president. It controlled the finances of the republic, and directed the foreign affairs of the country as if it were possessed of sovereign power.

Empires and kingdoms in those days kept up enormous fleets. Penguinia, compelled to do as they did, sank under the pressure of her armaments Everybody deplored or pretended to deplore so grievous a necessity. However, the rich, and those engaged in business or affairs, submitted to it with a good heart through a spirit of patriotism, and because they counted on the soldiers and sailors to defend their goods at home and to acquire markets and territories abroad. The great manufacturers encouraged the making of cannons and ships through a zeal for the national defence and in order to obtain orders. Among the citizens of middle rank and of the liberal professions some resigned themselves to this state of affairs without complaining, believing that it would last for ever; others waited impatiently for its end and thought they might be able to lead the powers to a simultaneous disarmament.

The illustrious Professor Obnubile belonged to this latter class.

"War," said he, "is a barbarity to which the progress of civilization will put an end. The great democracies are pacific and will soon impose their will upon the aristocrats."

Professor Obnubile, who had for sixty years led a solitary and retired life in his laboratory, whither external noises did not penetrate, resolved to observe the spirit of the peoples for himself. He began his studies with the greatest of all democracies and set sail for New Atlantis.

After a voyage of fifteen days his steamer entered, during the night, the harbour of Titanport, where thousands of ships were anchored. An iron bridge thrown across the water and shining with lights, stretched between two piers so far apart that Professor Obnubile imagined he was sailing on the seas of Saturn and that he saw the marvellous ring which girds the planet of the Old Man. And this immense conduit bore upon it more than a quarter of the wealth of the world. The learned Penguin, having disembarked, was waited on by automatons in a hotel forty-eight stories high. Then he took the great railway that led to Gigantopolis, the capital of New Atlantis In the train there were restaurants, gaming-rooms, athletic arenas, telegraphic, commercial, and financial offices, a Protestant Church, and the printing-office of a great newspaper, which latter the doctor was unable to read, as he did not know the language of the New Atlantans. The train passed along the banks of great rivers, through manufacturing cities which concealed the sky with the smoke from their chimneys, towns black in

the day, towns red at night, full of noise by day and full of noise also by night.

"Here," thought the doctor, "is a people far too much engaged in industry and trade to make war. I am already certain that the New Atlantans pursue a policy of peace. For it is an axiom admitted by all economists that peace without and peace within are necessary for the progress of commerce and industry."

As he surveyed Gigantopolis, he was confirmed in this opinion. People went through the streets so swiftly propelled by hurry that they knocked down all who were in their way. Obnubile was thrown down several times, but soon succeeded in learning how to demean himself better, after an hour's walking he himself knocked down an Atlantan.

Having reached a great square he saw the portico of a palace in the classic style, whose Corinthian columns reared their capitals of arborescent acanthus seventy metres above the stylobate.

As he stood with his head thrown back admiring the building, a man of modest appearance approached him and said in Penguin·

"I see by your dress that you are from Penguinia. I know your language; I am a sworn interpreter. This is the Parliament palace. At the present moment the representatives of the States are in deliberation. Would you like to be present at the sitting?"

The doctor was brought into the hall and cast his looks upon the crowd of legislators who were sitting on cane chairs with their feet upon their desks.

The President arose and, in the midst of general inattention, muttered rather than spoke the following formulas which the interpreter immediately translated to the doctor.

"The war for the opening of the Mongol markets being ended to the satisfaction of the States, I propose that the accounts be laid before the finance committee. . . ."

"Is there any opposition? . . ."

"The proposal is carried."

"The war for the opening of the markets of Third-Zealand being ended to the satisfaction of the States, I propose that the accounts be laid before the finance committee. . . ."

"Is there any opposition? . . ."

"The proposal is carried."

"Have I heard aright?" asked Professor Obnubile. "What? you an industrial people and engaged in all these wars!"

"Certainly," answered the interpreter, "these are industrial wars Peoples who have neither commerce nor industry are not obliged to make war,

but a business people is forced to adopt a policy of conquest. The number of wars necessarily increases with our productive activity As soon as one of our industries fails to find a market for its products a war is necessary to open new outlets. It is in this way we have had a coal war, a copper war, and a cotton war. In Third-Zealand we have killed two-thirds of the inhabitants in order to compel the remainder to buy our umbrellas and braces."

At that moment a fat man who was sitting in the middle of the assembly ascended the tribune.

"I claim," said he, "a war against the Emerald Republic, which insolently contends with our pigs for the hegemony of hams and sauces in all the markets of the universe "

"Who is that legislator?" asked Doctor Obnubile.

"He is a pig merchant."

"Is there any opposition?" said the President. "I put the proposition to the vote."

The war against the Emerald Republic was voted with uplifted hands by a very large majority.

"What?" said Obnubile to the interpreter; "you have voted a war with that rapidity and that indifference!"

"Oh! it is an unimportant war which will hardly cost eight million dollars "

"And men . . ."

"The men are included in the eight million dollars."

Then Doctor Obnubile bent his head in bitter reflection.

"Since wealth and civilization admit of as many causes of wars as poverty and barbarism, since the folly and wickedness of men are incurable, there remains but one good action to be done. The wise man will collect enough dynamite to blow up this planet. When its fragments fly through space an imperceptible amelioration will be accomplished in the universe and a satisfaction will be given to the universal conscience. Moreover, this universal conscience does not exist."

THE PROTESTANTISM OF G. K. CHESTERTON



PARADOX *was in G K. Chesterton the flashing of a distinctive insight often as penetrating as it was startling. "When men are weary they fall into anarchy, but while they are gay and vigorous they invariably make rules. . . . We are never free until some institution frees us, and liberty cannot exist till it is declared by authority." "A perpetual talking about one's own simplicity leads to being less simple. . . . It does not so very much matter whether a man eats a grilled tomato or a plain tomato, it does very much matter whether he eats a plain tomato with a grilled mind." "A man is angry at a libel because it is false, but at a satire because it is true." "Where in earth or heaven are there any prudent marriages? Might as well talk about prudent suicides."*

But this, which was his great gift, became his vice. With the years it grew into an obsession built on a mechanical formula, clanging in our ears with the relentless iteration of clashing cymbals. The simplest and most obvious of statements Chesterton had to contort into a verbal automatism of paradox until the reader came to feel that he could construct an

abstract pattern that would fit them all, merely inserting particular nouns and negations. "The trouble with politicians is that they have no politics"; "The Clapham patriot was ashamed of Clapham". a wearisome and inevitable insistence, not upon the A-ness, but the non-A-ness of A, and the regrettable emasculation of all P-ness from P.

Chesterton's significance, in a way, however, lies in the fact that his entire career was one of his own paradoxes. He rebelled with violence and a kind of splendor against the main currents of his time. By carrying skepticism beyond conventional limits he grew skeptical of skepticism He made radical criticisms of the leading spokesmen of the age in a volume entitled Heretics, *his own highly individualistic neomedievalism he published under the simple and modest designation,* Orthodoxy. The Napoleon of Notting Hill *glorified local patriotism and personal gallantry, as distinguished from the abstract superstate and institutions too remotely impersonal to be controlled or have vivid emotional power, in a spirit not dissimilar to the late Justice Brandeis's distrust of bigness. The same feeling animated the Declaration of Independence for Beacon House in* Manalive.

Deriding the modern faith that science will unlock all doors and tinkering with test tubes bring down to earth the glory of God, Chesterton showed Father Brown beating all the cigar-ash-analyzing sleuths and criminologists by a firm grasp on the strangeness of the obvious and a penetrating insight into men's hearts. He startled agnostics by pointing out that their recoil from any form of religious experience was positively dogmatic, and materialists by arguing that their determination to find in the universe nothing but matter so far outran reason as to be absolutely superstitious. In an age characterized by a uniformity of unbelief Chesterton achieved the heresy of denying all its dogmas and calling his denial orthodoxy His true distinction is thus that he was one of the great Protestants of the age.

During the Boer War he managed to protest against both imperialism and pacifism; he was a patriotic Englishman who hated bullying a nation of farmers for the profit of a gang of diamond merchants. "My point was that the Boers were right in fighting; not that anybody must be wrong in fighting." He hated the determinism that traced all men's actions to heredity and environment because he wished "to fix the terrible truth of Responsibility, not on tramps or drunkards, but on the rulers of the state and the richest men in the empire" And above all he abominated the dirty hands of plutocracy fouling the landscape and poisoning the streams

no more than they defiled the minds and hearts of men. This was why he reviled all the modern orthodoxies, subservient to schemers and hoarders, as no more than the painted doxies of wealth.

And this was partly why he assumed the rather quaint and flamboyant medievalism that he flaunted in the face of industrialism. It was not perhaps so much industrialism that Chesterton disliked as the stinks and filth of what Lewis Mumford *calls the paleotechnic environment; but the entrepreneur and financier he certainly hated with his whole heart. To modern chicanery, therefore, he opposed medieval chivalry. Better a* Napoleon *of* Notting Hill *than a* Napoleon *of finance, better the spirit of* Runnymede *than that of* Rothermere *and* Beaverbrook. *He fought with the forces of comic opera against the dark satanic mills that were spreading a miasma of despair over the modern world.*

The World War *was to him the culminating iniquity of the industrialists and internationalist money-changers. The nebulous promise of a war to end wars, which beclouded the judgments of the liberals, left Chesterton undazzled; he knew that* England *had her own* Prussians *at home, disguised as patriots. And still, with all her sins, "confused, corrupted, degraded,"* England *was preferable to "an inhuman and heathen hegemony." The* War *left everything where it had been—new noblemen blossoming out of obscure commercial soils, new business enterprises puffed and publicized, "and all the powers of scientific mergers and newspaper combines, that now rule the State"—all his old foes to be combated still.*

But Chesterton *fought with a sense of the magnificent glory of existence and struggle that the very evils against which he couched his lance were unable to destroy. It sharpened his fiery opposition "to the decadents and pessimists who ruled the culture of the age," flowering into the melodramatic fantasy of* The Man Who Was Thursday, *a pantomime that was nothing but a nightmare of things as they seemed to the pessimists of the nineties. In the midst of all his other quarrels with modern humanity, the fundamental one was that people "had resigned themselves to being citizens of mean cities," mean in architecture, costume, even manners, and, what was worst of all, mean in imaginative conception. Against this,* Chesterton *called on people to realize "the wonder and splendor of being alive."*

It is this glorious battle, of course, to which Manalive *is a call to arms.* Beacon House, *with its sad and defeated inhabitants, all not far, as* Michael Moon *says, from melancholy madness, is a symbol of the gray desolation*

spread by surrender to mechanical materialism and dull acquiescence in defeat. Beacon House is really Heartbreak House To it comes Innocent Smith, bursting with the joy of life, insisting that there is nothing mean, that trifles are tremendous, living in a world glowing with the yellow of gold, gleaming with the light of jewels, odorous with the perfume of flowers. His infectious vitality sweeps through these drab people, reanimating their dusty lives. Michael Moon awakes from his cynical bitterness, Rosamund Hunt from her mean suspicions of other people, Diana Duke is freed from her penny-pinching fear of life, and Arthur Inglewood from his timorous self-distrust. There is a violent outbreak of sanity in Beacon House. Life is filled for them all with a sense of power and glory.

This is the very core of Chesterton's crusade His own aliveness was a rich exuberance, sometimes almost grotesque But, at its best, his style was a strategy as well as a splendid jest. He dyed himself in motley that the world might have more abundant life.

MANALIVE

*** *Manalive* was first published in 1912. The selection given here includes all of Chapter 3 and about half of Chapter 4 ***

Violent Outbreak of Sanity in Beacon House

ALL NEXT day at Beacon House there was a crazy sense that it was everybody's birthday. It is the fashion to talk of institutions as cold and cramping things. The truth is that when people are in exceptionally high spirits, really wild with freedom and invention, they always must, and they always do, create institutions. When men are weary they fall into anarchy; but while they are gay and vigorous they invariably make rules. This, which is true of all the churches and republics of history, is also true of the most trivial parlour game or the most unsophisticated meadow romp. We are never free until some institution frees us, and liberty cannot exist till it is declared by authority. Even the wild authority of the harlequin Smith was still authority, because it produced everywhere a crop of crazy regulations and conditions. He filled every one with his own half-lunatic life; but it was not expressed in destruction, but rather in a dizzy and toppling construction. Each person with a hobby found it turning into an institution. Rosamund's songs seemed to coalesce into a kind of opera; Michael's jests and paragraphs into a magazine. His pipe and her mandoline seemed between them to make a sort of smoking concert. The bashful and bewildered Arthur Inglewood almost struggled against his own growing importance. He felt as if, in spite of him, his photographs were turning into a picture gallery, and his bicycle into a gymkhana. But no one had any time to criticize these impromptu estates and offices, for they followed each other in wild succession like the topics of a rambling talker.

Existence with such a man was an obstacle race made of pleasant obstacles. Out of any homely and trivial object he could drag reels of exaggeration, like a conjurer. Nothing could be more shy and impersonal than poor Arthur's photography. Yet, the preposterous Smith was seen assisting him eagerly through sunny morning hours, and an indefensible sequence described as "Moral Photography" began to unroll itself about the boarding house. It was only a version of the old photographer's joke which produces the same figure twice on one plate, making a man play chess with

himself, dine with himself, and so on. But these plates were more mystical and ambitious—as, "Miss Hunt forgets Herself," showing that lady answering her own too rapturous recognition with a most appalling stare of ignorance; or "Mr. Moon questions Himself," in which Mr. Moon appeared as one driven to madness under his own legal cross-examination, which was conducted with a long forefinger and an air of ferocious waggery. One highly successful trilogy—representing Inglewood recognizing Inglewood, Inglewood prostrating himself before Inglewood, and Inglewood severely beating Inglewood with an umbrella—Innocent Smith wanted to have enlarged and put up in the hall, like a sort of fresco, with the inscription,—

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
These three alone will make a man a prig."
Tennyson.

Nothing, again, could be more prosaic and impenetrable than the domestic energies of Miss Diana Duke. But Innocent had somehow blundered on the discovery that her thrifty dressmaking went with a considerable feminine care for dress—the one feminine thing that had never failed her solitary self-respect. In consequence Smith pestered her with a theory (which he really seemed to take seriously) that ladies might combine economy with magnificence if they could draw light chalk patterns on a plain dress and then dust them off again. He set up "Smith's Lightning Dressmaking Company" with two screens, a cardboard placard, and box of bright soft crayons; and Miss Diana actually threw him an abandoned black overall or working dress on which to exercise the talents of a modiste He promptly produced for her a garment aflame with red and gold sunflowers; she held it up an instant to her shoulders, and looked like an empress. And Arthur Inglewood, some hours afterwards cleaning his bicycle (with his usual air of being inextricably hidden in it), glanced up; and his hot face grew hotter, for Diana stood laughing for one flash in the doorway, and her dark robe was rich with the green and purple of great decorative peacocks, like a secret garden in the "Arabian Nights" A pang too swift to be named pain or pleasure went through his heart like an old-world rapier. He remembered how pretty he thought her years ago, when he was ready to fall in love with anybody, but it was like remembering a worship of some Babylonian princess in some previous existence. At his next glimpse of her (and he caught himself awaiting it) the purple and green chalk was dusted off, and she went by quickly in her working clothes.

As for Mrs. Duke, none who knew that matron could conceive her as actively resisting this invasion that had turned her house upside down. But among the most exact observers it was seriously believed that she liked it. For she was one of those women who at bottom regard all men as equally

mad, wild animals of some utterly separate species. And it is doubtful if she really saw anything more eccentric or inexplicable in Smith's chimney-pot picnics or crimson sunflowers than she had in the chemicals of Inglewood or the sardonic speeches of Moon. Courtesy, on the other hand, is a thing that any one can understand, and Smith's manners were as courteous as they were unconventional. She said he was "a real gentleman," by which she simply meant a kind-hearted man, which is a very different thing She would sit at the head of the table with fat, folded hands and a fat, folded smile for hours and hours, while everyone else was talking at once. At least, the only other exception was Rosamund's companion, Mary Gray, whose silence was of a much more eager sort. Though she never spoke she always looked as if she might speak any minute. Perhaps this is the very definition of a companion. Innocent Smith seemed to throw himself, as into other adventures, into the adventure of making her talk. He never succeeded, yet he was never snubbed; if he achieved anything, it was only to draw attention to this quiet figure, and to turn her, by ever so little, from a modesty to a mystery. But if she was a riddle, every one recognized that she was a fresh and unspoilt riddle, like the riddle of the sky and the woods in spring. Indeed, though she was rather older than the other two girls, she had an early morning ardour, a fresh earnestness of youth, which Rosamund seemed to have lost in the mere spending of money, and Diana in the mere guarding of it. Smith looked at her again and again. Her eyes and mouth were set in her face the wrong way—which was really the right way. She had the knack of saying everything with her face· her silence was a sort of steady applause.

But among the hilarious experiments of that holiday (which seemed more like a week's holiday than a day's) one experiment towers supreme, the joke about the High Court of Beacon.

It had originated, not with Innocent Smith, but with Michael Moon. He was in a strange glow and pressure of spirits, and talked incessantly; yet he had never been more sarcastic, and even inhuman. He used his old useless knowledge as a barrister to talk entertainingly of a tribunal that was a parody on the pompous anomalies of English law. The High Court of Beacon, he declared, was a splendid example of our free and sensible constitution. It had been founded by King John in defiance of Magna Carta, and now held absolute power over windmills, wine and spirit licenses, ladies travelling in Turkey, revision of sentences for dog-stealing and parricide, as well as anything whatever that happened in the town of Market Bosworth. The whole hundred and nine seneschals of the High Court of Beacon met once in every four centuries; but in the intervals (as Mr Moon explained) the whole powers of the institution were vested in Mrs.

Duke. Tossed about among the rest of the company, however, the High Court did not retain its historical and legal seriousness, but was used somewhat unscrupulously in a riot of domestic detail. If somebody spilt the Worcester Sauce on the tablecloth, he was quite sure it was a rite without which the sittings and findings of the Court would be invalid; or if somebody wanted a window to remain shut, he would suddenly remember that none but the third son of the lord of the manor of Penge had the right to open it. They even went the length of making arrests and conducting criminal inquiries. The proposed trial of Moses Gould for patriotism was rather above the heads of the company, especially of the criminal; but the trial of Inglewood on a charge of photographic libel, and his triumphant acquittal upon a plea of insanity, were admitted to be in the best traditions of the Court.

But when Smith was in wild spirits he grew more and more serious, not more and more flippant like Michael Moon. This proposal of a private court of justice, which Moon had thrown off with the detachment of a political humorist, Smith really caught hold of with the eagerness of an abstract philosopher. It was by far the best thing they could do, he declared, to claim sovereign powers even for the individual household.

"You believe in Home Rule for Ireland, I believe in Home Rule for homes," he cried eagerly to Michael. "It would be better if every father could kill his son, as with the old Romans, it would be better, because nobody would be killed. Let's issue a Declaration of Independence from Beacon House. We could grow enough greens in that garden to support us, and when the tax-collector comes let's tell him we're self-supporting, and play on him with the hose. . . . Well, perhaps, as you say, we couldn't very well have a hose, as that comes from the main; but we could sink a well in this chalk, and a lot could be done with water jugs. . . . Let this be really Beacon House. Let's light a bonfire of independence on the roof, and see house after house answering it across the valley of the Thames! Let us begin the League of the Free Families! Away with Local Government! A fig for Local Patriotism! Let every house be a sovereign state as this is, and judge its own children by its own law, as we do by the Court of Beacon. Let us cut the painter, and begin to be happy together, as if we were on a desert island."

Said Michael, laughing, "Oh, I know you would find everything in that atmosphere. If we wanted such a simple thing, for instance, as a Coronation Canopy, we should walk down beyond the geraniums and find the Canopy Tree in full bloom. If we wanted such a trifle as a crown of gold, why, we should be digging up dandelions, and we should find a gold mine under the lawn."

"I believe every blessed thing you say couldn't be here has been here all the time. We could collect enough ten-shilling bits from our own pockets to string round a man's head for half an hour; or one of Miss Hunt's gold bangles is nearly big enough to—"

The good-humoured Rosamund was almost choking with laughter. "All is not gold that glitters," she said; "and besides—"

"What a mistake that is!" cried Innocent Smith, leaping up in great excitement. "All is gold that glitters—especially now we are a Sovereign State. What's the good of a Sovereign State if you can't define a sovereign? We can make anything a precious metal, as men could in the morning of the world. They didn't choose gold because it was rare, your scientists can tell you twenty sorts of slime much rarer. They chose gold because it was bright—because it was a thing hard to find, but pretty when you've found it. You can't fight with golden swords or eat golden biscuits; you can only look at it—and you can look at it out here."

With one of his incalculable motions he sprang back and burst open the doors into the garden. At the same time also, with one of his gestures that never seemed at the instant so unconventional as they were, he stretched out his hand to Mary Gray, and led her out on to the lawn as if for a dance.

"What would be the good of gold," he was saying, "if it did not glitter? Why should we care for a black sovereign any more than a black sun at noon? A black button would do just as well. Don't you see that everything in this yard looks like a jewel? And will you kindly tell me what the deuce is the good of a jewel except that it looks like a jewel? Leave off buying and selling, and start looking! Open your eyes, and you'll wake up in the New Jerusalem.

"All is gold that glitters—
Tree and tower of brass;
Rolls the golden evening air
Down the golden grass.
Kick the cry to Jericho,
How yellow mud is sold;
All is gold that glitters,
For the glitter is the gold."

"And who wrote that?" asked Rosamund, amused.

"No one will ever write it," answered Smith, and cleared the rockery with a flying leap.

"Really," said Rosamund to Michael Moon, "he ought to be sent to an asylum. Don't you think so?"

"I beg your pardon," inquired Michael, rather sombrely; his long, swarthy head was dark against the sunset, and, either by accident or mood,

he had the look of something isolated and even hostile amid the social extravagance of the garden.

"I only said Mr. Smith ought to go to an asylum," repeated the lady.

The lean face seemed to grow longer and longer, for Moon was unmistakably sneering.

"No," he said; "I don't think it's at all necessary."

"What do you mean?" asked Rosamund quickly. "Why not?"

"Because he is in one now," answered Michael Moon, in a quiet but ugly voice. "Why, didn't you know?"

"What?" cried the girl, and there was a break in her voice; for the Irishman's face and voice were really almost creepy. With his dark figure and dark sayings in all that sunshine he looked like the devil in paradise.

"I'm sorry," he continued, with a sort of harsh humility. "Of course we don't talk about it much . . . but I thought we all really knew."

"Knew what?"

"Well," answered Moon, "that Beacon House is a certain rather singular sort of house—a house with the tiles loose, shall we say? Innocent Smith is only the doctor that visits us, hadn't you come when he called before? As most of our maladies are melancholic, of course he has to be extra cheery. Sanity, of course, seems a very bumptious eccentric thing to us. Jumping over a wall, climbing a tree—that's his bedside manner."

"You daren't say such a thing!" cried Rosamund in a rage. "You daren't suggest that I—"

"Not more than I am," said Michael soothingly, "not more than the rest of us. Haven't you ever noticed that Miss Duke never sits still—a notorious sign? Haven't you ever observed that Inglewood is always washing his hands—a known mark of mental disease? I, of course, am a dipsomaniac."

"I don't believe you," broke out his companion, not without agitation. "I've heard you had some bad habits—"

"All habits are bad habits," said Michael, with deadly calm. "Madness does not come by breaking out, but by giving in, by settling down in some dirty, little, self-repeating circle of ideas, by being tamed. You went mad about money, because you're an heiress."

"It's a lie," cried Rosamund furiously. "I never was mean about money."

"You were worse," said Michael, in a low voice and yet violently. "You thought that other people were. You thought every man who came near you must be a fortune hunter, you would not let yourself go and be sane; and now you're mad and I'm mad, and serve us right."

"You brute!" said Rosamund, quite white. "And is this true?"

With an intellectual cruelty of which the Celt is capable when his abysses are in revolt, Michael was silent for some seconds, and then stepped back

with an ironical bow. "Not literally true, of course," he said; "only reall true. An allegory, shall we say? a social satire."

"And I hate and despise your satires," cried Rosamund Hunt, lettin loose her whole forcible female personality like a cyclone, and speakin every word to wound. "I despise it as I despise your rank tobacco, an your nasty, loungy ways, and your snarling, and your Radicalism, an your old clothes, and your potty little newspaper, and your rotten failu at everything. I don't care whether you call it snobbishness or not, I lil life and success, and jolly things to look at, and action. You won't frighte me with Diogenes; I prefer Alexander."

"Victrix causa deae—" said Michael gloomily; and this angered her mor as, not knowing what it meant, she imagined it to be witty.

"Oh, I dare say you know Greek," she said, with cheerful inaccuracy, "you haven't done much with that either." And she crossed the garden, pursuing the vanished Innocent and Mary.

In doing so she passed Inglewood, who was returning to the house slowly, and with a thought-clouded brow. He was one of those men who are quite clever, but quite the reverse of quick. As he came back out of the sunset garden into the twilight parlour, Diana Duke slipped swiftly to her feet and began putting away the tea things. But it was not before Inglewood had seen an instantaneous picture so unique that he might well have snapshotted it with his everlasting camera. For Diana had been sitting in front of her unfinished work with her chin on her hand, looking straight out of the window in pure thoughtless thought.

"You are busy," said Arthur, oddly embarrassed with what he had seen, and wishing to ignore it.

"There's no time for dreaming in this world," answered the young lady with her back to him.

"I have been thinking lately," said Inglewood in a low voice, "that there's no time for waking up."

She did not reply, and he walked to the window and looked out on the garden.

"I don't smoke or drink, you know," he said irrelevantly, "because I think they're drugs. And yet I fancy all hobbies, like my camera and bicycle, are drugs, too. Getting under a black hood, getting into a dark room —getting into a hole anyhow. Drugging myself with speed, and sunshine, and fatigue, and fresh air. Pedalling the machine so fast that I turn into a machine myself. That's the matter with all of us. We're too busy to wake up."

"Well," said the girl solidly, "what is there to wake up to?"

"There must be!" cried Inglewood, turning round in a singular excite-

ment—"there must be something to wake up to! All we do is preparations —your cleanliness, and my healthiness, and Warner's scientific appliances We're always preparing for something—something that never comes off. I ventilate the house, and you sweep the house; but what is going to happen in the house?"

She was looking at him quietly, but with very bright eyes, and seemed to be searching for some form of words which she could not find.

Before she could speak the door burst open, and the boisterous Rosamund Hunt, in her flamboyant white hat, boa, and parasol, stood framed in the doorway. She was in a breathing heat, and on her open face was an expression of the most infantile astonishment.

"Well, here's a fine game!" she said, panting. "What am I to do now, I wonder?"

"What is the matter?" asked Diana, rather sharply, but moving forward like one used to be called upon for assistance.

"It's Mary," said the heiress, "my companion Mary Gray: that cracked friend of yours called Smith has proposed to her in the garden, after ten hours' acquaintance, and he wants to go off with her now for a special licence."

Diana Duke seemed inexplicably irritated at the abrupt entrance and utterance of the other girl.

"Well," she said shortly, "I suppose Miss Gray can decline him if she doesn't want to marry him."

"But she does want to marry him!" cried Rosamund in exasperation. "She's a wild, wicked fool, and I won't be parted from her."

"Perhaps," said Diana icily; "but I really don't see what we can do"

"But the man's balmy, Diana," reasoned her friend angrily. "I can't let my nice governess marry a man that's balmy! You or somebody must stop it!—Mr. Inglewood, you're a man; go and tell them they simply can't"

"Unfortunately, it seems to me they simply can," said Inglewood, with a depressed air. "I have far less right of intervention than Miss Duke, besides having, of course, far less moral force than she."

"You haven't either of you got much," cried Rosamund, the last stays of her formidable temper giving way, "I think I'll go somewhere else for a little sense and pluck. I think I know some one who will help me more than you do, at any rate . . . he's a cantankerous beast, but he's a man, and has a mind, and knows it . . ." And she flung out into the garden, with cheeks aflame, and the parasol whirling like a Catherine wheel.

She found Michael Moon standing under the garden tree, looking over the hedge, hunched like a bird of prey, with his large pipe hanging down his long blue chin The very hardness of his expression pleased her, after

the nonsense of the new engagement and the shilly-shallying of her other friends.

"I am sorry I was cross, Mr. Moon," she said frankly. "I hated you for being a cynic; but I've been well punished, for I want a cynic just now. I've had my fill of sentiment—I'm fed up with it. The world's gone mad, Mr Moon—all except the cynics, I think. That maniac Smith wants to marry my old friend Mary, and she—and she—doesn't seem to mind."

Seeing his attentive face still undisturbedly smoking, she added smartly, "I'm not joking; that's Mr. Smith's cab outside. He swears he'll take her off now to his aunt's, and go for a special licence. Do give me some practical advice, Mr. Moon."

Mr. Moon took his pipe out of his mouth, held it in his hand for an instant reflectively, and then tossed it to the other side of the garden. "My practical advice to you is this," he said· "Let him go for his special licence, and ask him to get another one for you and me."

"Is that one of your jokes?" asked the young lady. "Do say what you really mean."

"I mean that Innocent Smith is a man of business," said Moon with ponderous precision—"a plain, practical man; a man of affairs; a man of facts and the daylight. He has let down twenty ton of good building bricks suddenly on my head, and I am glad to say they have woken me up. We went to sleep a little while ago on this very lawn, in this very sunlight. We have had a little nap for five years or so, but now we're going to be married, Rosamund, and I can't see why that cab . . ."

"Really," said Rosamund stoutly, "I don't know what you mean."

"What a lie!" cried Michael, advancing on her with brightening eyes. "I'm all for lies in an ordinary way; but don't you see that to-night they won't do? We've wandered into a world of facts, old girl. That grass growing, and that sun going down, and that cab at the door, are facts. You used to torment and excuse yourself by saying I was after your money, and didn't really love you. But if I stood here now and told you I didn't love you—you wouldn't believe me; for truth is in this garden to-night."

"Really, Mr. Moon . . ." said Rosamund, rather more faintly.

He kept two big blue magnetic eyes fixed on her face. "Is my name Moon?" he asked. "Is your name Hunt? On my honour, they sound to me as quaint and distant as Red Indian names. It's as if your name was 'Swan' and my name was 'Sunrise.' But our real names are Husband and Wife, as they were when we fell asleep."

"It is no good," said Rosamund, with real tears in her eyes, "one can never go back."

"I can go where I damn please," said Michael, "and I can carry you on my shoulder."

"*But really, Michael, really, you must stop and think!*" cried the girl earnestly. "You could carry me off my feet, I dare say, soul and body, but it may be bitter bad business for all that. These things done in that romantic rush, like Mr. Smith's, they–they do attract women, I don't deny it. As you say, we're all telling the truth to-night. They've attracted poor Mary, *for one. They attract me, Michael. But the cold fact remains, imprudent* marriages do lead to long unhappiness and disappointment–you've got used to your drinks and things–I shan't be pretty much longer–"

"Imprudent marriages!" roared Michael. "And pray where in earth or heaven are there any prudent marriages? Might as well talk about prudent suicides. You and I have dawdled round each other long enough, and are we any safer than Smith and Mary Gray, who met last night? You never know a husband till you marry him. Unhappy! of course you'll be unhappy. Who the devil are you that you shouldn't be unhappy, like the mother that bore you? Disappointed! of course we'll be disappointed. I, for one, don't expect till I die to be so good a man as I am at this minute, for just now I'm fifty thousand feet high–a tower with all the trumpets shouting."

"You see all this," said Rosamund, with a grand sincerity in her solid face, "and do you really want to marry me?"

"My darling, what else is there to do?" reasoned the Irishman. "What other occupation is there for an active man on this earth, except to marry you? What's the alternative to marriage, barring sleep? It's not liberty, Rosamund. Unless you marry God, as our nuns do in Ireland, you must marry Man–that is Me. The only third thing is to marry yourself–to live with yourself–yourself, yourself, yourself–the only companion that is never satisfied–and never satisfactory."

"Michael," said Miss Hunt, in a very soft voice, "if you won't talk so much, I'll marry you."

"It's no time for talking," cried Michael Moon; "singing is the only thing. Can't you find that mandoline of yours, Rosamund?"

"Go and fetch it for me," said Rosamund, with crisp and sharp authority.

The lounging Mr. Moon stood for one split second astonished; then he shot away across the lawn, as if shod with the feathered shoes out of the Greek fairy tale. He cleared three yards and fifteen daisies at a leap, out of mere bodily levity; but when he came within a yard or two of the open parlour windows, his flying feet fell in their old manner like lead; he twisted round and came back slowly, whistling. The events of that enchanted evening were not at an end.

Inside the dark sitting-room of which Moon had caught a glimpse a curious thing had happened, almost an instant after the intemperate exit of Rosamund. It was something which, occurring in that obscure parlour, seemed to Arthur Inglewood like heaven and earth turning head over heels, the sea being the ceiling and the stars the floor. No words can express how it astonished him, as it astonishes all simple men when it happens. Yet the stiffest female stoicism seems separated from it only by a sheet of paper or a sheet of steel. It indicates no surrender, far less any sympathy. The most rigid and ruthless woman can begin to cry, just as the most effeminate man can grow a beard. It is a separate sexual power, and proves nothing one way or the other about force of character. But to young men ignorant of women, like Arthur Inglewood, to see Diana Duke crying was like seeing a motor-car shedding tears of petrol.

He could never have given (even if his really manly modesty had permitted it) any vaguest vision of what he did when he saw that portent. He acted as men do when a theatre catches fire—very differently from how they would have conceived themselves as acting, whether for better or worse. He had a faint memory of certain half-stifled explanations, that the heiress was the only really paying guest, and she would go, and the bailiffs (in consequence) would come; but after that he knew nothing of his own conduct except by the protests it evoked.

"Leave me alone, Mr. Inglewood—leave me alone; that's not the way to help."

"But I can help you," said Arthur, with grinding certainty; "I can, I can, I can. . . ."

"Why, you said," cried the girl, "that you were much weaker than me."

"So I am weaker than you," said Arthur, in a voice that went vibrating through everything, "but not just now."

"Let go my hands!" cried Diana. "I won't be bullied."

In one element he was much stronger than she—the matter of humour. This leapt up in him suddenly, and he laughed, saying: "Well, you are mean. You know quite well you'll bully me all the rest of my life. You might allow a man the one minute of his life when he's allowed to bully."

It was as extraordinary for him to laugh as for her to cry, and for the first time since her childhood Diana was entirely off her guard.

"Do you mean you want to marry me?" she said.

Inglewood looked around dreamily, his brown eyes devouring all sorts of details with a senseless delight. He noticed for the first time that the railings of the gate beyond the garden bushes were moulded like little spear-heads and painted blue. He noticed that one of the blue spears was loosened in its place, and hung sideways; and this almost made him laugh. He thought

it somehow exquisitely harmless and funny that the railing should be crooked, he thought he should like to know how it happened, who did it, and how the man was getting on.

When they were gone a few feet across that fiery grass they realized that they were not alone. Rosamund Hunt and the eccentric Mr. Moon, both of whom they had last seen in the blackest temper of detachment, were standing together on the lawn. They were standing in quite an ordinary manner, and yet they looked somehow like people in a book.

"Oh," said Diana, "what lovely air!"

"I know," called out Rosamund, with a pleasure so positive that it rang out like a complaint. "It's just like that horrid, beastly, fizzy stuff they gave me that made me feel happy."

"Oh, it isn't like anything but itself!" answered Diana, breathing deeply. "Why, it's all cold, and yet it feels like fire."

"Balmy is the word we use in Fleet Street," said Mr. Moon. "Balmy—especially on the crumpet." And he fanned himself quite unnecessarily with his straw hat. They were all full of little leaps and pulsations of objectless and airy energy. Diana stirred and stretched her long arms rigidly, as if crucified, in a sort of excruciating restfulness, Michael stood still for long intervals, with gathered muscles, then spun round like a teetotum, and stood still again, Rosamund did not trip, for women never trip, except when they fall on their noses, but she struck the ground with her foot as she moved, as if to some inaudible dance tune, and Inglewood, leaning quite quietly against a tree, had unconsciously clutched a branch and shaken it with a creative violence. Those giant gestures of Man, that make the high statues and the strokes of war, tossed and tormented all their limbs. Silently as they strolled and stood they were bursting like batteries with an animal magnetism.

"And now," cried Moon quite suddenly, stretching out a hand on each side, "let's dance round that bush!"

"Why, what bush do you mean?" asked Rosamund, looking round with a sort of radiant rudeness.

"The bush that isn't there," said Michael—"The Mulberry Bush."

BEERBOHM AND THE TECHNIQUE OF CARICATURE



MAX BEERBOHM *is the most delicately perfect of all burlesque artists. His caricatures of well-known people achieve striking decorative pattern and most exquisitely witty comment on their subjects by the faintest distortions. His satiric fairy tales, psychological portraits, and essays etch human weaknesses with the lightest and most silvery of acids, just hinting our absurdities with an amused, an elusive, a quietly impersonal malice. His parodies of literary figures ape with such sedulous restraint the stylistic eccentricities of his victims that his exaggerations are barely more than observable. It is a minor art, deliberately so, this which Beerbohm practices, but it is contrived with the hand of a master.*

No other writer, not even James or Flaubert, is more conscious of technique and purpose. "The perfect caricature," Beerbohm writes, "must be an exaggeration from top to toe." "The whole man must be melted down, as in a crucible, and then, as from the solution, be fashioned anew. He must emerge with not one particle of himself lost, yet with not a particle of himself as it was before." "The most perfect caricature is that which . . . with the simplest means most accurately exaggerates . . . the pecu-

liarities of a human being, at his most characteristic moment, in the most beautiful manner."

This species of exaggeration, very precise, very urbane, and just a shade gracefully cynical, Beerbohm attains in his portrayal of the whole human race, whether in his caricatures with the brush and pencil or those conceived in words. Zuleika Dobson is a highly sophisticated spoof of both the Gothic romance and the sophisticated novel. A Christmas Garland pretends to be a series of Christmas stories. But, with extraordinary virtuosity, each is written in the style of a different author, and, with extraordinary nicety of observation, many parts of each parody might quite seriously have been written by the victim himself. In the very process of showing up his victims' weaknesses, indeed, Beerbohm illumines their virtues too; by showing us the formal basis of their achievement, his distorting mirror enhances the great images of James and Meredith in our admiration almost as much as it reveals the dangers that sometimes overtake them. These imitations, then, of Kipling, Wells, Bennett, Conrad, Hardy, and the others are filled with implications that make them rich sources of literary insight. They are a subtle exercise in the art of criticism.

Beerbohm is a subtler, although not a sharper or deadlier, ironist than Anatole France. The great French writer is concerned with the eternal verities, Beerbohm with the truths of a day. France is sometimes more flippant on the surface; underneath, it is he who is serious and Beerbohm who is flippant. France's flippancy often springs from a desire to shock his readers. So vulgar a desire would leave Beerbohm, not shocked, but disapproving. He has not merely elegance of manner, but manners. His wit prefers to be "the kind that pierces without leaving a wound," a swift and almost imperceptible flash of the rapier. The essence of his art is an exaggeration so unobtrusively veiled that only a happy few perceive the cloven hoof of irreverence. For them his light disdain may be purgative. But only those to whom Sir Willoughby Patterne is, disquietingly, not beyond all question merely a neighbor may enter this circle; only they may know this catharsis. For it, like caricature, "postulates the power to see things, unerringly, as they are."

EUPHEMIA CLASHTHOUGHT

««« Eight of the parodies in *A Christmas Garland* had appeared at various times in the London *Saturday Review*, the other nine were new at the time the volume was first published in 1912. "Euphemia Clashthought," here given complete, was among the earlier group, and was originally published during Meredith's lifetime »»»

Maidenly Strategy Eludes Divine Worship

IN THE heart of insular Cosmos, remote by some scores of leagues of Hodge-trod arable or pastoral, not more than a snuff-pinch for gaping tourist nostrils accustomed to inhalation of prairie winds, but enough for perspective, from those marginal sands, trident-scraped, we are to fancy, by a helmeted Dame Abstract familiarly profiled on discs of current bronze —price of a loaf for humbler maws disdainful of Gallic side-dishes for the titillation of choicer palates—stands Clashthought Park, a house of some pretension, mentioned at Runnymede, with the spreading exception of wings given to it in later times by Daedalean masters not to be baulked of billiards or traps for Terpsichore, and owned for unbroken generations by a healthy line of procreant Clashthoughts, to the undoing of collateral branches eager for the birth of a female. Passengers through cushioned space, flying top-speed or dallying with obscure stations not alighted at apparently, have had it pointed out to them as beheld dimly for a privileged instant before they sink back behind crackling barrier of instructive paper with a "Thank you, Sir," or "Madam," as the case may be. Guide-books praise it. I conceive they shall be studied for a cock-shy of rainbow epithets slashed in at the target of Landed Gentry, premonitorily. The tintinnabulation's enough. Periodical footings of Clashthoughts into Mayfair or the Tyrol, signalled by the slide from its mast of a crested index of Aeolian caprice, blazon of their presence, give the curious a right to spin through the halls and galleries under a cackle of housekeeper guideship—scramble for a chuck of the dainties, dog fashion. There is something to be said for the rope's twist. Wisdom skips.

It is recorded that the goblins of this same Lady Wisdom were all agog one Christmas morning between the doors of the house and the village church, which crouches on the outskirt of the park, with something of a lodge in its look, you might say, more than of celestial twinkles, even with

Christmas hoar-frost bleaching the grey of it in sunlight, as one sees imaged on seasonable missives for amity in the trays marked "sixpence and upwards," here and there, on the counters of barter.

Be sure these goblins made obeisance to Sir Peter Clashthought, as he passed by, starched beacon of squirearchy, wife on arm, sons to heel. After him, certain members of the household—rose-chapped males and females, *bearing books of worship. The pack of goblins glance up the drive with* nudging elbows and whisperings of "Where is daughter Euphemia? Where Sir Rebus, her affianced?"

Off they *scamper for a peep through the windows of the house.* They throng the sill of the library, ears acock and eyelids twittering admiration of a prospect. Euphemia was in view of them—essence of her. Sir Rebus was at her side Nothing slips the goblins.

"Nymph in the Heavy Dragoons" was Mrs. Cryptic-Sparkler's famous definition of her. The County took it for final—an uncut gem with a fleck in the heart of it. Euphemia condoned the imagery. She had breadth. Heels that spread ample curves over the ground she stood on, and hands that might floor you with a clench of them, were hers. Grey eyes looked out lucid and fearless under swelling temples that were lost in a ruffling copse of hair. Her nose was virginal, with hints of the Iron Duke at most angles. Square chin, cleft centrally, gave her throat the look of a tower with a gun protrudent at top. She was dressed for church evidently, but seemed no slave to Time. Her bonnet was pushed well back from her head, and she was fingering the ribbons One saw she was a woman. She inspired deference.

"Forefinger for Shepherd's Crook" was what Mrs Cryptic-Sparkler had said of Sir Rebus It shall stand at that

"You have Prayer Book?" he queried

She nodded. *Juno catches the connubial trick.*

"Hymns?"

"Ancient and Modern."

"I *may share with you?*"

"I know by heart. Parrots sing."

"Philomel carols," he bent to her.

"Complaints spoil a festival."

He waved hand to the door. "Lady, your father has started."

"He knows the adage. Copy-books instil it."

"Inexorable truth in it."

"We may dodge the scythe."

"*To be choked with the sands?*"

She flashed a smile "I would not," he said, "that my Euphemia were late for the Absolution."

She cast eyes to the carpet. He caught them at the rebound.

"It snows," she murmured, swimming to the window.

"A flake, no more. The season claims it."

"I have thin boots."

"Another pair?"

"My maid buttons. She is at church."

"My fingers?"

"Ten on each."

"Five," he corrected.

"Buttons."

"I beg your pardon."

She saw opportunity. She swam to the bell-rope and grasped it for a tinkle. The action spread feminine curves to her lover's eyes. *He* was a man.

Obsequiousness loomed in the doorway. Its mistress flashed an order for port—two glasses. Sir Rebus sprang a pair of eyebrows on her. Suspicion slid down the banisters of his mind, trailing a blue ribbon. Inebriates were one of his hobbies. For an instant she was sunset.

"Medicinal," she murmured.

"Forgive me, Madam. A glass, certainly. 'Twill warm us for worshipping."

The wine appeared, seemed to blink owlishly through the facets of its decanter, like some hoary captive dragged forth into light after years of subterraneous darkness—something querulous in the sudden liberation of it. Or say that it gleamed benignant from its tray, steady-borne by the hands of reverence, as one has seen Infallibility pass with uplifting of jewelled fingers through genuflexions to the Balcony. Port has this in it: that it compels obeisance, master of us; as opposed to brother and sister wines wooing us with a coy flush in the gold of them to a cursory tope or harlequin leap shimmering up the veins with a sly wink at us through eyelets. Hussy vintages swim to a cosset. We go to Port, mark you!

Sir Rebus sipped with an affectionate twirl of thumb at the glass's stem. He said "One scents the cobwebs."

"Catches in them," Euphemia flung at him.

"I take you. Bacchus laughs in the web."

"Unspun but for Pallas."

"A lady's jealousy."

"Forethought, rather."

"Brewed in the paternal pate. Grant it!"

"For a spring in accoutrements."

Sir Rebus inclined gravely. Port precludes prolongment of the riposte.

She replenished glasses. Depreciation yielded. "A step," she said, "and we are in time for the First Lesson."

"This," he agreed, "is a wine."

"There are blasphemies in posture. One should sit to it."

"Perhaps." He sank to commodious throne of leather indicated by her finger.

Again she filled for him. "This time, no heel-taps," she was imperative. "The Litany demands basis."

"True." He drained, not repelling the decanter placed at his elbow

"It is a wine," he presently repeated with a rolling tongue over it.

"Laid down by my great-grandfather. Cloistral."

"Strange," he said, examining the stopper, "no date. Antediluvian. Sound, though."

He drew out his note-book. "*The senses,*" he wrote, "*are internecine. They shall have learned esprit de corps before they enslave us.*" This was one of his happiest flings to general from particular. "*Visual distraction cries havoc to ultimate delicacy of palate*" would but have pinned us a butterfly best a-hover, nor even so should we have had truth of why the aphorist, closing note-book and nestling back of head against that of chair, closed eyes also.

As by some such law as lurks in meteorological toy for our guidance in climes closeknit with Irony for bewilderment, making egress of old woman synchronise inevitably with old man's ingress, or the other way about, the force that closed the aphorist's eyelids parted his lips in degree according. Thus had Euphemia, erect on hearth-rug, a cavern to gaze down into Outworks of fortifying ivory cast but denser shadows into the inexplorable. The solitudes here grew murmurous. To and fro through secret passages in the recesses leading up deviously to lesser twin caverns of nose above, the gnomes Morphean went about their business, whispering at first, but presently bold to wind horns in unison—Rolandwise, not less.

Euphemia had an ear for it; whim also to construe lord and master relaxed but reboant and soaring above the verbal to harmonic truths of abstract or transcendental, to be hummed subsequently by privileged female audience of one bent on a hook-or-crook plucking out of pith for salvation.

She caught tablets pendent at her girdle "*How long,*" queried her stilus, "*has our sex had humour? Jael hammered.*"

She might have hitched speculation further. But Mother Earth, white-mantled, called to her.

Casting eye of caution at recumbence, she paddled across the carpet and anon swam out over the snow.

Pagan young womanhood, six foot of it, spanned eight miles before luncheon.

SINISTER STRIPLING: SAKI



THE STRANGE, *elusive flavor of Saki's satire resists analysis. It does not lie even in his characteristic wit, which is at once electric and as freezing as an icicle. Neither is it in his extreme and ornate worldliness, although even Oscar Wilde was not so intricately baroque. Saki's mordant little stories move in a society frothing with the sparkle of chilled champagne and scented with the conservatory, aglitter with conversationalists carefully laying down the most lethally Corinthian phrases in all literature. His Hellenistically depraved young men have a tinge of Renaissance cruelty. They are as careful of the cut of a deadly aphorism as they are of the cut of a morning coat, as exquisite in the distillation of a poisonous epithet as in the choice of a hock. Their world is a world of epicurean snobbery and privilege refined to an art.*

But even toward this orchidaceous milieu in which he feels so at ease Saki has certain reservations of irony. Its elegance, its superiority, its supreme desirableness, which he seems at first to assume, he is forever undermining with a naked and youthful savagery, a kind of feasting ferocity, revealing the dullness, boorishness, and ill-breeding beneath the glaze. It is noteworthy that his instruments of chastisement are nearly always young people and children, some precociously sophisticated stripling rousing himself from the contemplation of his own perfections to whip the assertion

of a vulgarer egoism than his own, a six-year-old boy or a self-possessed young lady of nine inflicting nemesis on some adult pretension or meanness.

The truth is that Saki himself has something of the inhuman heartlessness of childhood He had suffered as a boy from some appalling aunts; it is no accident that his stories often dwell on aunts and werewolves, with more sympathy for werewolves Again and again he shows childhood in cruel triumph over an adult, playing on grownups some brilliant or brutal prank which is the wish-fulfillment of a boy's dream His terrifying children are legion· Matilda Cuvering using the harmless boar-pig to intimidate a would-be gatecrasher, Nicholas strategically enticing his aunt-by-assertion into the gooseberry garden, that imaginative young romancer whom Saki ironically baptizes Vera, Conradin subjecting another auntlike guardian to the macabre vengeance of Sredni Vashtar. Clovis Sangrail and Bertie van Tahn, those seventeen-year-old terrors armed in insolence, unscrupulousness, and charm, are the exquisite projections of adolescent ambition Even Saki's mature men of the world always have a touch of the enfant terrible. *His esoteric flavor lies in this fusion of an elaborate and overpowering worldliness with boyhood brutality*

It is the constant ingredient in his wit. "Sir Wilfrid protested that you were the most brainless woman of his acquaintance, and that there was a wide distinction between hospitality and care of the feeble-minded" "He was blessed with a small income and a large circle of relatives, and lived impartially and precariously on both" "Dobrinton was bitten by a dog which was assumed to be mad, though it may only have been undiscriminating." It appears in the mingled insouciance and rudeness of his incredible heroes. It appears even in the marvelous and unparalleled names he invents for his characters, all either ludicrous absurdity or fantastic glamour: Lady Carlotta, Sir Lulworth Quayne, the Dowager Lady Greymarten, and Clovis Sangrail contrasting with Lady Blonze, Ada Spelvexit, Loona Bimberton, and Mrs Quabarl.

There are few aspects of fatuity or of social, intellectual, and artistic snobbery that did not feel Saki's caressing assaults He has darts for the dullness of upper-middle-class suburbia and rural England, for the unimaginativeness of politicians, for the morals of country-house week ends, and for the pretentious philistinism of artistic and literary fashions "The Schartz-Metterklume Method" manages simultaneously to score off the

dominating female and to burlesque the exaggerations of pedagogical theory. Its cutting felicities of phrase are in Saki's best vein of malign urbanity. Lady Carlotta and Mrs. Quabarl are each wonderfully and perfectly realized, and if, by way of a rarity, the young people are subjected to a condign iron hand, we may note that Claude, Wilfrid, Irene, and Viola are such children as the Mrs. Quabarls of this world bring forth

THE SCHARTZ-METTERKLUME METHOD

««« "The Schartz-Metterklume Method," here given complete, was one of the stories in *Beasts and Superbeasts*, first published in 1914 »»»

Lady Carlotta Becomes a Governess

LADY CARLOTTA stepped out on to the platform of the small wayside station and took a turn or two up and down its uninteresting length, to kill time till the train should be pleased to proceed on its way. Then, in the roadway beyond, she saw a horse struggling with a more than ample load, and a carter of the sort that seems to bear a sullen hatred against the animal that helps him to earn a living. Lady Carlotta promptly betook her to the roadway, and put rather a different complexion on the struggle. Certain of her acquaintances were wont to give her plentiful admonition as to the undesirability of interfering on behalf of a distressed animal, such interference being "none of her business." Only once had she put the doctrine of non-interference into practice, when one of its most eloquent exponents had been besieged for nearly three hours in a small and extremely uncomfortable may-tree by an angry boar-pig, while Lady Carlotta, on the other side of the fence, had proceeded with the water-colour sketch she was engaged on, and refused to interfere between the boar and his prisoner. It is to be feared that she lost the friendship of the ultimately rescued lady. On this occasion she merely lost the train, which gave way to the first sign of impatience it had shown throughout the journey, and steamed off without her. She bore the desertion with philosophical indifference; her friends and relations were thoroughly well used to the fact of her luggage arriving without her. She wired a vague non-committal message to her destination to say that she was coming on "by another train" Before she had time to think what her next move might be she was confronted by an imposingly attired lady, who seemed to be taking a prolonged mental inventory of her clothes and looks

"You must be Miss Hope, the governess I've come to meet," said the apparition, in a tone that admitted of very little argument.

"Very well, if I must I must," said Lady Carlotta to herself with dangerous meekness

"I am Mrs. Quabarl," continued the lady; "and where, pray, is your luggage?"

"It's gone astray," said the alleged governess, falling in with the excellent rule of life that the absent are always to blame; the luggage had, in point of fact, behaved with perfect correctitude. "I've just telegraphed about it," she added, with a nearer approach to truth.

"How provoking," said Mrs. Quabarl; "these railway companies are so careless. However, my maid can lend you things for the night," and she led the way to her car.

During the drive to the Quabarl mansion Lady Carlotta was impressively introduced to the nature of the charge that had been thrust upon her; she learned that Claude and Wilfrid were delicate, sensitive young people, that Irene had the artistic temperament highly developed, and that Viola was something or other else of a mould equally commonplace among children of that class and type in the twentieth century.

"I wish them not only to be *taught*," said Mrs. Quabarl, "but *interested* in what they learn. In their history lessons, for instance, you must try to make them feel that they are being introduced to the life-stories of men and women who really lived, not merely committing a mass of names and dates to memory. French, of course, I shall expect you to talk at mealtimes several days in the week."

"I shall talk French four days of the week and Russian in the remaining three."

"Russian? My dear Miss Hope, no one in the house speaks or understands Russian."

"That will not embarrass me in the least," said Lady Carlotta coldly.

Mrs. Quabarl, to use a colloquial expression, was knocked off her perch. She was one of those imperfectly self-assured individuals who are magnificent and autocratic as long as they are not seriously opposed. The least show of unexpected resistance goes a long way towards rendering them cowed and apologetic. When the new governess failed to express wondering admiration of the large newly purchased and expensive car, and lightly alluded to the superior advantages of one or two makes which had just been put on the market, the discomfiture of her patroness became almost abject. Her feelings were those which might have animated a general of ancient warfaring days, on beholding his heaviest battle-elephant ignominiously driven off the field by slingers and javelin throwers.

At dinner that evening, although reinforced by her husband, who usually duplicated her opinions and lent her moral support generally, Mrs. Quabarl regained none of her lost ground. The governess not only helped herself well and truly to wine, but held forth with considerable show of critical

knowledge on various vintage matters, concerning which the Quabarls were in no wise able to pose as authorities. Previous governesses had limited their conversation on the wine topic to a respectful and doubtless sincere expression of a preference for water. When this one went as far as to recommend a wine firm in whose hands you could not go very far wrong Mrs. Quabarl thought it time to turn the conversation into more usual channels.

"We got very satisfactory references about you from Canon Teep," she observed, "a very estimable man, I should think."

"Drinks like a fish and beats his wife, otherwise a very lovable character," said the governess imperturbably.

"My *dear* Miss Hope! I trust you are exaggerating," exclaimed the Quabarls in unison.

"One must in justice admit that there is some provocation," continued the romancer. "Mrs. Teep is quite the most irritating bridge-player that I have ever sat down with; her leads and declarations would condone a certain amount of brutality in her partner, but to souse her with the contents of the only soda-water syphon in the house on a Sunday afternoon, when one couldn't get another, argues an indifference to the comfort of others which I cannot altogether overlook. You may think me hasty in my judgments, but it was practically on account of the syphon incident that I left."

"We will talk of this some other time," said Mrs Quabarl hastily.

"I shall never allude to it again," said the governess with decision.

Mr Quabarl made a welcome diversion by asking what studies the new instructress proposed to inaugurate on the morrow.

"History to begin with," she informed him

"Ah, history," he observed sagely; "now in teaching them history you must take care to interest them in what they learn You must make them feel that they are being introduced to the life-stories of men and women who really lived–"

"I've told her all that," interposed Mrs. Quabarl.

"I teach history on the Schartz-Metterklume method," said the governess loftily.

"Ah, yes," said her listeners, thinking it expedient to assume an acquaintance at least with the name.

"What are you children doing out here?" demanded Mrs Quabarl the next morning, on finding Irene sitting rather glumly at the head of the stairs, while her sister was perched in an attitude of depressed discomfort on the window-seat behind her, with a wolf-skin rug almost covering her.

"We are having a history lesson," came the unexpected reply. "I am supposed to be Rome, and Viola up there is the she-wolf, not a real wolf, but

the figure of one that the Romans used to set store by—I forget why Claude and Wilfrid have gone to fetch the shabby women."

"The shabby women?"

"Yes, they've got to carry them off. They didn't want to, but Miss Hope got one of father's fives-bats and said she'd give them a number nine spanking if they didn't, so they've gone to do it."

A loud, angry screaming from the direction of the lawn drew Mrs. Quabarl thither in hot haste, fearful lest the threatened castigation might even now be in process of infliction. The outcry, however, came principally from the two small daughters of the lodge-keeper, who were being hauled and pushed towards the house by the panting and dishevelled Claude and Wilfrid, whose task was rendered even more arduous by the incessant, if not very effectual, attacks of the captured maidens' small brother. The governess, fives-bat in hand, sat negligently on the stone balustrade, presiding over the scene with the cold impartiality of a Goddess of Battles. A furious and repeated chorus of "I'll tell muvver" rose from the lodge children, but the lodge-mother, who was hard of hearing, was for the moment immersed in the preoccupation of her washtub. After an apprehensive glance in the direction of the lodge (the good woman was gifted with the highly militant temper which is sometimes the privilege of deafness) Mrs. Quabarl flew indignantly to the rescue of the struggling captives.

"Wilfrid! Claude! Let those children go at once. Miss Hope, what on earth is the meaning of this scene?"

"Early Roman history; the Sabine women, don't you know? It's the Schartz-Metterklume method to make children understand history by acting it themselves; fixes it in their memory, you know. Of course, if, thanks to your interference, your boys go through life thinking that the Sabine women ultimately escaped, I really cannot be held responsible."

"You may be very clever and modern, Miss Hope," said Mrs. Quabarl firmly, "but I should like you to leave here by the next train. Your luggage will be sent after you as soon as it arrives."

"I'm not certain exactly where I shall be for the next few days," said the dismisssed instructress of youth; "you might keep my luggage till I wire my address. There are only a couple of trunks and some golf-clubs and a leopard cub."

"A leopard cub!" gasped Mrs. Quabarl. Even in her departure this extraordinary person seemed destined to leave a trail of embarrassment behind her.

"Well, it's rather left off being a cub; it's more than half-grown, you know. A fowl every day and a rabbit on Sundays is what it usually gets.

Raw beef makes it too excitable. Don't trouble about getting a car for me, I'm rather inclined for a walk."

And Lady Carlotta strode out of the Quabarl horizon.

The advent of the genuine Miss Hope, who had made a mistake as to the day on which she was due to arrive, caused a turmoil which that good lady was quite unused to inspiring. Obviously the Quabarl family had been woefully befooled, but a certain amount of relief came with the knowledge.

"How tiresome for you, dear Carlotta," said her hostess, when the overdue guest ultimately arrived, "how very tiresome losing your train and having to stop overnight in a strange place "

"Oh, dear, no," said Lady Carlotta, "not at all tiresome—for me."

NORMAN DOUGLAS: SOPHISTICATE



NORMAN DOUGLAS *was the high priest of sophistication in the* 1920's, *and* South Wind *the esoteric testament in the religion of dis illusion. Mencken's green-clad* American Mercury *was making jazz attacks on the booboisie and the Bible belt in prose like a chorus of saxophones, and debunkers were taking the rainbow out of the American dream. It was the era of raccoon coats and Harlem nightclubs, of the Black Bottom and bootleg liquor and the bull market. In the rumble seats of roadsters at country-club dances sad young men necked melancholy babies who were beautiful and damned, and, sickening with Mr. Krutch's modern dis temper, mourned the romantic illusion of love while they savored the sly priapic fantasies of* Jurgen. *The war to make the world safe for democracy had ended in the cynicism of* Versailles, *the promise of American life corroded into Teapot Dome, liberalism was bankrupt. The postwar waste land was filled with hollow men desperately pursuing distraction in artistic bohemias. A generation that saw itself as brilliant and bitter and Byronic sneered at puritanism and progress and lifted weary eyebrows at love and life.*

To these attitudes South Wind *forcibly appealed. It gave them a machinery of wit and scholarship, a content of brilliant and encyclopedic cultural information, a form of cerebral detachment and intellectual justice. It enabled its readers to feel almost as clever, cultivated, and Olympian*

as Norman Douglas. It was sharp with inverted clichés, spiced with paradox, gamy with the odor of sexuality and strange perversions. The champagne of its ingenuities intoxicated admirers with the heady flavor of freedom. Under the guise of cynicism and disillusion it stimulated a powerful complacence.

In a way, South Wind is a Pilgrim's Progress in reverse. Bishop Heard, an embodiment of all the social, intellectual, and moral commonplaces of the average man, is brought into the disorganizing atmosphere of the island of Nepenthe. Under its gradual erosion his responses melt through shock, bewilderment, passivity, toleration, and enjoyment to a startled emancipation. What can a boy have in common with his mother?—"Everything!" says Mr. Heard enthusiastically; nonsense, says Mr. Keith. "Nobody can misunderstand a boy like his own mother." Perhaps the drunken Miss Wilberforce should be put away where she can't shock people by removing all her clothing in public?—Nothing of the kind, retorts Keith again; what is the harm of these bibulous habits compared with the ferocious intoxication of self-righteousness that would see her confined? And presently the bewildered bishop finds himself being asked to consider scoundrels as works of art, to judge Jehovah by his failure to behave like a gentleman, and to realize that progress is a barbarity incompatible with civilization. The bishop's moral disintegration is complete when he finds that he considers his cousin, Mrs. Meadows, whom he has just seen push a man off a cliff, the most respectable person on the island.

There is a curious mingling of sincerity and insincerity behind these paradoxes. Norman Douglas hates both the Puritan, with his self-complacent asceticism, and his secular descendant, the modern businessman. Wit, intellectual, and aesthete, Douglas attacks the two with all the acid of an emancipated superiority. His philosophy is that of a Renaissance hedonist, but to it he brings a formidable equipment drawn from the arsenal of the ages: the subtle logic of a medieval rationalist, the fantastic learning of a seventeenth-century scholar, the scientific background of a post-Darwinian. The combination is not all pose. There really is in Douglas something at once epicenely Grecian and lewdly monastic. But there is also pedantry in his parade of monstrous erudition, pose in his epicurean languor, that air of being so much the man of the world that bombshells of iconoclasm fall almost unaware from his lips.

His audience is to picture him, in fact, as like the gods in Lucretius, forever amused and untouched. He is a man of learning; hence the chap-

ters on the medicinal fountains, the Good Duke, the antiquities of Nepenthe. He is superior to his own learning; hence the elaborate insouciance, the foolery, the air of suggesting that all this is only play to a gentleman and a scholar. He is emancipated, let it be clear, from conventional judgments, hence the haste with which he flies into a great calm about corruption, fornication, and murder. "Trifles like these?" he seems to murmur "Why so hot, little man?" He is, in short, a sophisticate, for whom to be is not enough unless he is also known to be: sophistication being a counterfeit of urbanity.

Nevertheless, no picture of postwar satire would be complete that did not show South Wind *and its influence. Its very defects are representative, and they are almost lost in the glitter and coruscation of Douglas's wit, his knowledge, his oblique and often revealing perspectives on conventional viewpoints. But his stature as a satirist is diminished, for all these striking gifts, by the pre-eminence of his desire to impress the reader with this delicate and civilized superiority of Norman Douglas. He has no desire to change the world, little faith in change save as novelty. He has satirized many things, and satirized them all brilliantly but for the fact that he has been less concerned with them than with himself. He has no loyalty to truth, but only to his own intellectual dandyism; he would reverse himself for a witticism. Even as devil's advocate he has been moved less by satanic loyalty than by pure deviltry. There has been no cleverer satirist in our century, but Douglas has made cleverness a hall of mirrors for reflecting himself rather than an instrument dedicated to reality, and thereby dwindled to intellectual vaudeville what might have been the satire of a philosophic sage.*

SOUTH WIND

*** *South Wind* was originally published in 1917. The selection given here includes most of Chapters 24 and 25. The conversation takes place in Keith's boat, idling by the rocky cliffs of Nepenthe's coastline ***

Upstairs and Downstairs Gods

"HONOUR THY father and thy mother," [Keith] proceeded. . . . "What think you, Heard, of this old injunction? Is it not altogether obsolete? Was it not written for quite other conditions? Honour thy father and mother. Why? The State educates children, feeds them, investigates and cures their complaints, washes and weighs them, reports on their teeth and stomachs, prescribes when they may begin to smoke and enter public-houses where does parental authority come in? The State provides old folks with refuges and pensions how about the former obligations of children? Child and parent alike now thank the community for what they once received from each other. And the geographical elements that went to the making of a home are also dispersed Rich and poor roam like gipsies from one country to another, from one flat into the next; the patriarchal board is replaced by clubs and grill-rooms and fried-fish shops. Many a man who thinks to found a home discovers that he has merely opened a tavern for his friends. Note, too, that the family has outgrown its ecclesiastical sanction, the oil of supernaturalism which once greased the wheels has run dry, the machinery is creaking. Industrial conditions have killed the old home *Requiescat!* Honour thy father and mother. Industrialism has killed that commandment. Thou shalt not steal Consider this injunction, Heard, and ask yourself whether industrialism does not split its sides with laughing at it. If we are to galvanize that old collection of laws into some semblance of life, every one of them must be rewritten and brought up to date. They are inappropriate for modern life; their interest is purely historical. We want new values. We are no longer nomads. Industrialism has killed the pastoral and the agricultural points of view. And how the modern Jews smile at our infatuation for those queer doctrines and legends which they themselves have long ago outgrown."

His companion, meanwhile, beheld the panorama in all its nightmarish splendour, as it drifted past him. He saw the bluffs of feathery pumice, the

lava precipices—frozen cataracts of white, black, blood red, pale grey and sombre brown, smeared over with a vitreous enamel of obsidian or pierced by oily, writhing dykes that blazed with metallic scintillations. Anon came some yawning cleft or an assemblage of dizzy rock-needles, fused into whimsical tints and attitudes, spiky, distorted, over-toppling; then a bold tufa rampart, immaculate in its beauty, stainless as a curtain of silk. And as the boat moved on, he looked into horrid dells which the rains had torn out of the loose scoriæ. Gaping wounds, they wore the bright hues of corruption. Their flanks were blotched with a livid nitrous efflorescence, with flaring sulphur, unhealthy verdure of pitchstone, streaks of arsenical vermilion; their beds—a frantic maze of boulders.

He beheld this crazy stratification, this chaos of incandescent nature, set in a flame of deep blue sky and sea. It lay there calmly, like some phantasmagoric flower, some monstrous rose that swoons away, with upturned face, in a solar caress.

He saw it with the eye. His mind was elsewhere. He was trying, in honest and relentless fashion, to discover himself. What if his human values were really wrong?

Thomas, the doubting apostle. . . .

Africa had made him think; had made him more silent and reflective than ever. And now this sudden strange stimulus of Nepenthe—it was driving his thoughts headlong, out of their old grooves.

Here was Keith, a man of altogether different stamp, drawing conclusions which he dared not formulate for himself. How far were they applicable, those old Hebrew precepts, to modern conditions? Were they still availing as guides to conduct?

"You are a candid person, Keith, and I think I am. I sincerely try to be. Will you tell me what you think? You seem to have a quarrel with Moses and his commandments, which we are taught to regard as the keystone of ethics. I don't want to discuss things. I want to listen to the opinions of a man so different from myself as you are. It may do me good. And I think I could stand almost anything," he added, with a laugh, "in this landscape —in this clear pagan light, as you call it."

"I used to be interested in such things as a boy. I suppose all respectable boys are; and I was respectable even at that tender age. Nowadays, though I still pick up an Oriental rug now and then, I have no further use *for* Oriental gods."

"What is your objection to them?"

Mr. Keith paused before replying. Then he said:

"The drawback of Oriental gods is that they have been manufactured

by the proletariat for the use of the aristocracy. They act accordingly, that is, they distil the morality of their creators which I consider a noxious emanation. The classic gods were different. They were invented by intellectualists who felt themselves capable of maintaining a kind of comradeship with their deities. Men and gods were practically on a level. They walked hand in hand over the earth. These gods belonged to what one might call the horizontal or downstairs variety."

"And those others?"

"Oh, they are the upstairs or vertical type. They live overhead. Why overhead? Because they have been created by the proletariat. The proletariat loves to humiliate itself. Therefore they manufacture a god who approves of grovelling, a god who can look down upon them. They exalt this deity to an infinite degree in point of goodness and distance, and in so doing they inevitably abase themselves. Now I disapprove of grovelling. That means I disapprove of upstairs gods."

"Upstairs gods——"

"If you walk into my front door as a distinguished visitor I am happy to show you the place. You can prowl about the garden, poke your nose into the pantry and learn, if it amuses you, all about my private life. But if you rent a high attic overlooking my premises and stare out of your window all day long, watching my movements and noting down everything I do, why, damn it, I call that vulgar. Staring is bad form. Vertical gods are inquisitive. I don't like to be supervised. I don't care about this *dossier* business. My garden is for you and me to walk about in, not for outsiders to stare into. Which reminds me that you have not been to see me lately. You ought to come and look at my cannas, you really ought! They are in magnificent bloom just now. When shall it be?"

Mr. Keith seemed to be already tired of the subject. In fact he was as near being bored as ever he allowed himself to be. But the other refused to let the conversation be side-tracked. He wanted to know.

"Vertical and horizontal gods. . . . Dear me. Sounds rather profane."

"I have not heard that word for quite a long time."

"You don't feel the need of any kind of superior being to control human affairs?"

"Not up to the present. I can find no room in my Cosmos for a deity, save as a waste product of human weakness, an excrement of the imagination. If you gave me the sauciest god that ever sat on a cloud or breakfasted with the Village Idiot—'pon my word, I shouldn't know what to do with him. I don't collect bric-à-brac myself, and the British Museum is dreadfully overstocked. Perhaps the Duchess could make some use of him, if he

specialized in lace vestments and choral mass. By the way, I hear that she is going to be admitted into the Roman Church next week; there is to be a luncheon after the ceremony. Are you going?"

"Vertical and horizontal gods. . . . I never heard that distinction made before."

"It is a difference, my dear Heard. Mankind remains in direct contact with the downstairs variety. That simplifies matters. But the peculiar position of those others—perpendicularly overhead at a vast distance—necessitates a troublesome code of verbal signals, unintelligible to common folk, for the expression of mutual desires. You cannot have any god of this kind without some such cumbrous contrivance to bridge over the gulf and make communication possible. It is called theology. It complicates life very considerably. Yes," he pursued, "the vertical god system is not only vulgar; it is perplexing and expensive. Think of the wastage, of the myriads of people who have been sacrificed because they misinterpreted some enigmatical word in the code. Why are you intent on these conundrums?"

"Well, partly at least, it's quite a practical matter. You know that American millionaire, van Koppen, and the scandal attached to his peculiar habits? It made me wonder, only yesterday——"

But at this juncture the tiresome old boatman lifted up his voice once more.

"See that high cliff, gentlemens? Funny thing happen there, very funny. Dam-fool foreigner here, he collects flowers. Always collecting flowers on bad rocks; sometimes with rope round him, for fear of falling, with rope, ha, ha, ha! Nasty man. And poor. No money at all. He always says, 'All Italians liars, and liars where go? To Hell, sure. That's where liars go. That's where Italians go.' Now rich man he say liar to poor man. But poor man, he better not say liar to rich man. That so, gentlemens. One day he say liar to nice old Italian. Nice old man think: 'Ah, you wait, putrid puppy of bastard pig, you wait.' Nice old man got plenty good lot vineyards back of cliff there. One day he walk to see grapes. Then he look to end of cliff and see rope hanging. Very funny, he think. Then he look to end of rope and see nasty-man hanging. That so, gentlemens. Nasty-man hanging in air. Can't get up. 'Pull me up,' says he. Nice old man, he laugh—ha, ha, ha! laugh till his belly hurt. Then he pull out knife and begin to cut rope. 'See knife?' he shout down. 'How much to pull up?' Five hundred dollar! 'How much?' Five thousand! 'How much?' Fifty thousand! Nice old man say quite quiet: 'You no got fifty thousand in the world, you liar. Liars where go? To Hell, sure. That's where liars go. That's where you go, Mister. To Hell.' And he cut rope. Down he go, patatrac! round and round in air, like firework wheel, on to first rock—paff! second rock—paff! third rock—

paff! fifty rock—pa-pa-pa-paff! Six hundred feets. After that he arrive, all messy, in water. That so, gentlemens. Gone where to? Swim to Philadelphia? I don't think! Him drownded, sure. Ha, ha, ha! Nice old man, when he come home that morning, he laugh. He laugh. He just laugh. He laugh first quiet, then loud. He laugh all the time, and soon family too. He laugh for ten days, till he nearly die. Got well again, and live plenty good years after. In Paradise to-day, God rest his soul! And never found out, no never. Fine judge on Nepenthe. Always fine judge here. He know everything, and he know nothing. Understand? All nice people here. That so, gentlemens."

He told the tale with Satanic gusto, rocking himself to and fro as though convulsed with some secret joy. Then, after expectorating violently, he resumed the oars which had been dropped in the heat of gesticulation.

The bishop was pensive. There was something wrong with this story—something fundamentally wrong. He turned to Keith.

"That man must be a liar too. If, as he says, the thing was never found out, how can he have learnt all about it?"

"Hush, my dear fellow. He thinks I don't know, but I do. It was his own father to whom the adventure occurred."

"The adventure!" said Mr. Heard.

"The adventure. Surely you are not going to make a tragedy of it? If you cannot see the joke of that story, you must be hard to please. I nearly died of laughing when I first heard it."

"What would you have done?"

"If I had been the botanist? I would not have made myself disagreeable to the natives. Also, I would not have got myself into a tangle with that rope."

"You think he ought to have cut it?"

"What else could the poor fellow do? It strikes me, Heard, you attach inordinate importance to human life."

"It's all rather complex," sighed the bishop.

"Now that is really interesting!"

"Interesting?"

"Why should you find it complex, when I find it simple? Let me see. Our lives are perfectly insignificant, aren't they? We know it for a fact. But we don't like it. We don't like being of no account. We want some thing to make us feel more valuable than we are. Consequently we invent a fiction to explain away that insignificance—the fiction of a personality overhead everlastingly occupied in watching every single one of us, and keenly engrossed in our welfare. If this were the case, we would cease to be insignificant, and we might try to oblige him by not killing each other. It hap-

pens to be a fiction. Get rid of the fiction, and your feeling of complexity evaporates. I perceive you are in an introspective mood. Worrying about some pastoral epistle?"

"Worrying about my values, as you would say. Up to the present, Keith, I don't seem to have had time to think; I had to act; there was always something urgent to be taken in hand. Now that I am really lazy for the first time, and in this stimulating environment, certain problems of life keep cropping up. Minor problems, of course; for it is a consolation to know that the foundations of good conduct are immutable. Our sense of right and wrong is firmly implanted in us. The laws of morality, difficult as they often are to understand, have been written down for our guidance in letters that never change."

"Never change? You might as well say, my dear Heard, that these cliffs never change. The proof that the laws of good conduct change is this, that if you were upright after the fashion of your great-grandfather you would soon find yourself in the clutches of the law for branding a slave, or putting a bullet through someone in a duel. I grant that morality changes slowly. It changes slowly because the proletariat, whose product it is, does the same. There is not much difference, I imagine, between the crowds of old Babylon and new Shoreditch; hence their peculiar emanations resemble each other more or less. That is why morality compares so unfavourably with intellectuality, which is the product of the upper sections of society and flashes out new lights every moment. But even morality changes. The Spartans, a highly moral people, thought it positively indecent not to steal. A modern vice, such as mendacity, was accounted a virtue by the greatest nation of antiquity. A modern virtue, like that of forgiving one's enemies, was accounted a vice proper to slaves Drunkenness, reprobated by ancients and moderns alike, became the mark of a gentleman in intermediate periods."

"I see what you are driving at. You wish me to think that this fictitious value, as you would call it—this halo of sanctity—with which we now invest a human life, may be blown away at any moment. Possibly you are right. Perhaps we English do exaggerate its importance They don't take much account of life in my part of Africa."

"And then, I disagree with what you say about the difficulty of understanding the laws of morality. Any child can grasp the morality of its period. Why should I pretend to be interested in what a child can grasp? It is a positive strain to keep one's mind at that low level. Why should I impose this strain upon myself? When a grown-up man shows an unfeigned interest in such questions I regard him as a case of arrested develop-

ment. All morality is a generalization, and all generalizations are tedious. Why should I plague myself with what is tedious? Altogether the question that confronts me is not whether morality is worth talking about, but whether it's worth laughing at."

"I am listening, and thinking. Please go on. I'll preach you my sermon some other day."

"Will you? I wonder! I don't believe, Heard, that you will preach another sermon in your life. I don't think you will ever go back to Africa, or to any other episcopal work. I think you have reached a turning point."

The bishop was thoughtful for a moment. Those words went home. . . .

"What were you going to say about the American millionaire?"

"Ah yes," replied Mr. Heard. "I wondered, supposing these reports about the ladies are true, how far you and I, for example, should condone his vices."

"Vices. My dear Bishop! Under a sky like this. Have a good look at it, do."

Mr. Heard, barely conscious of what he was doing, obeyed the counsel. Raising his hand, he pushed the silken awning to one side. Then he peered skyward, into the noonday zenith; into an ocean of blue, immeasurable. There was no end to this azure liquid. Gazing thus, his intelligence became aware of the fact that there are skies of different kinds. This one was not quite like his native firmament. Here was no suggestion of a level space overhead, remote, but still conceivable—a space whereon some god might have sat enthroned, note-book in hand, jotting down men's virtues, and vices, and what not. A sky of this kind was obviously not built to accommodate deities in a sitting posture.

Instead of commenting on this simple observation he remarked:

"I mean, whether one should publicly approve of van Koppen's ladies, supposing they exist."

"Why should I approve or disapprove? Old Koppen's activities do not impinge on mine. Like a sensible fellow he cultivates a hobby. He indulges himself. Why interfere? Tell me, why should I disapprove of things?"

"Look here, Keith! Not long ago you were disapproving of vertical gods."

"That is different. They do impinge on my activities."

"Are the peculiar hobbies of their votaries distasteful to you?"

"Not at all. Their hobbies do not clash with mine. To feel righteous, or to feel sinful, is quite an innocent form of self-indulgence——"

"Innocent self-indulgence? Dear me! You seem to be taking *morality* by the throat for a change. Is that your conception of sin? How should Moses have come to inscribe some particular form of wrong-doing into his Code, if it had not proved harmful to the community at large?"

His friend paused before replying. He took out another cigar, bit off its end, and lighted it. Then he sent a few fragrant whiffs over the sea. At last he said:

"Moses! I have a clear portrait of Moses in my mind; a clear and favourable portrait. I imagine him gentle, wise, and tolerant. Picture to yourself such a man. He is drawing up a preliminary list of the more noteworthy forms of misconduct, with a view to submitting it for Divine approval, to be welded later into the so-called Ten Commandments. He is still puzzling, you perceive, which sins ought to be included and which left out. Now that particular offence of which our millionaire is accused happens to have been left out of consideration so far."

"Why has it been left out?" enquired the bishop.

"Nomadic habits. And besides—Moses, don't forget, is a kindly old fellow, who likes people to have as much harmless amusement as possible; he is not always sniffing about to discover evil. But Aaron, or some other old family friend of his, thinks differently. He is a person such as we all know—a sour-faced puritan who has lost the vigour which people, rightly or wrongly, attribute to van Koppen. This man forgets what he used to do in his own youthful days; he comes up to Moses, professing to be horrified at this particular offence. 'These young people,' he says, 'the way they go on! It's a sin, that's what it is. And you, Moses, I'm ashamed of you. This sort of thing ought to be stopped. It ought to be publicly reprimanded in those blessed Tables of yours.' 'A sin?' says gentle Moses. 'You surprise me, Aaron. I confess it never struck me in that light before. But I think I see your point. We have a conference to-night on the Holy Mountain; I may be able to get a clause inserted——' 'Do, there's a good fellow,' says the other. 'But aren't you a little hard on the youngsters?' asks Moses. 'You wouldn't believe it, but I was a boy myself once and I should have got into a lot of rows if such an enactment had been in existence then. Moreover (and here his eyes assume a rapt, prophetic look) I seem to see, rising out of the distant future, a personage of royal line, beloved of God—one David who, if your proposal were to come into force, would be classed as a pretty hot sinner.' 'Oh, brother David! Look here, I'm not asking for a loan of money, old man. Just see to it that my New Sin is inscribed on the Tables. Hang it all! What's that, to a man of your influence up there? You can't think how it annoys me nowadays to see all these young people—all these young people—need I go into particulars?' 'You needn't. I'm not altogether a fool,' says gentle Moses. 'And I'll see what I can do to oblige you, if only for the sake of your dear mother.'"

The bishop, at the end of this narration, could not help smiling.

"That," continued Keith, "is how Moses gets talked over by the Pharisees.

That is how sins are manufactured and classified. And from that preposterous old Hebrew system of right and wrong they jump straight into our English penal code. And there they sit tight," he added.

"Is that your quarrel with what you call the upstairs god system?"

"Precisely! It does not affect me by its unsanitary tendency to multiply *sins. It affects me when it impinges on my own activities;* that is to say, when it transforms those sins into legal crimes. How would you like to be haled before a Court of law for some ridiculous trifle, which became a crime only because it used to be a sin, and became a sin only because some dyspeptic or impotent old antediluvian was envious of his neighbour's pleasure? Our statute-book reeks of discredited theories of conduct; the serpent's trail of the theologian, of the reactionary, is over all."

"It never struck me in that light before," said Mr. Heard.

"No? Our reverence for inspired idiots has it never struck you? Don't you realize that we are still in the stage of that *enfant terrible* of Christianity, Paul of Tarsus, and his gift of tongues?" . . .

Mr. Heard had listened enough for the time being. Now he leaned back and rested.

But Keith was wide awake.

"You are a disappointing person, Mr. Heard. First you inveigle me into a religious discussion and then, when I begin to wake up, you go to sleep."

"I didn't want to argue, my dear fellow. It's too hot to argue. I wanted to hear your opinion."

"My opinion? Listen, Heard. All mankind is at the mercy of a handful of neurotics. Neurotics and their catchwords. Catchwords like duty, charity, purity, sobriety. Sobriety! In order that Miss Wilberforce may not come home drunk—listen, Heard!—all we other lunatics forgo the pleasure of a pint of beer after ten o'clock. How we love tormenting ourselves! Listen, Heard. I'll tell you what it is. We are ripe for a new Messiah, like these Russians. We are not Europeans. We are Indian fakirs, self-torturers. We are a pack of masochists That is what upstairs gods have done for us. Listen, Heard!"

The bishop failed to catch the import of this peroration. Its sound alone reached him like an echo from far away He was unaccountably drowsy.

SINCLAIR LEWIS SEES RED



ALL Sinclair Lewis's books have been part of a vast, loosely constructed, and grandiose encyclopedio-journalistic scheme of passing in satiric review the whole panorama of contemporary American society: the small town, business, education, religion, the medical profession, law enforcement, politics, pressure groups and professional reformers, the theater, parents and children, husbands and wives But the satire is sounded in ambiguously contradictory ways, the implications of Babbitt *hardly harmonize with those of* Dodsworth *and are violently at odds with* The Prodigal Parents. *Nor is the contradiction to be resolved as merely a change developing in time, the prodigal repenting and returning to a dinner of husks. It antedated and mingled in with Lewis's best satire, it was a confusion in Lewis's own heart; it lay in the fact that Lewis inherently was much of what he satirized. The author of* Dodsworth *was merely the author of* Babbitt *inverted. This was what endowed Lewis with his insight and sharpened his fury. And it explains how Lewis is so easily able to relapse into Babbittry and sentimentalize the very businessman he had cruelly dissected; explains his willingness to use a minimum of observation in satirizing modern youth by drawing upon the memories of his own youthful and nebulous radicalism when he ran the furnace of Helicon Hall.*

Lewis's satire is thus personal as well as social, although it is not predominantly autobiographic. The McGurk Institute and Capitola McGurk,

in Arrowsmith, clearly had specific models, and there may well have been personal originals for such characters as the egregious Dr. Almus Pickerbaugh and Chum Frink, the newspaper bard and advertising laureate. But making game of individuals, although it sharpened Lewis's malicious insight, was small game to him. It was really the whole of modern America from Gopher Prairie to the glittering pinnacles of business that he was out to bring down. Wells had tried in his realistic novels to do the same thing with English society. Lewis, with a like but even more pronounced provinciality, tried to do it with our own· the red-necked country boy, son of the Middle Western pioneers, turned city feller and social critic, Brother Jonathan losing half his twang but retaining all his tartness If Wells was something like Old Bill satirizing England, Lewis was Main Street personified looking in the mirror and seeing red.

Of the two major satiric strategies, the roundabout flanking movement and the head-on attack, Lewis's temper consequently chooses the simpler. Not for him the insidious opiates of Anatole France, the polysyllabic mystifications of Thorstein Veblen. His is the lie direct, the blow, the abusive word, the violent and vituperative description. And these are all aided in Lewis by an almost startling photographic and phonographic naturalism. He has a sharp eye for the landscape of America, its yellow grainlands and timbered lakes, the endless prairie sky at dusk and the granite jutting out of green Vermont meadows, the Sauk Centres, Wheatsylvanias, and Zeniths, the gritty plush of day coaches and the polychrome-and-marble clamor of smartly standardized hotels. He has a sharp ear for American speech, the idiom of its Vergil Gunches, Bert Tozers, Sam Clarkes, Ezra Stowbodys, Howard Littlefield, Ph.D.'s, Miles Bjornstams, Jim Leffertses, and Cliff Clawsons The Man Who Knew Coolidge—the dullest although not the worst book Lewis ever wrote—suffers, in fact, not from burlesque, but from an excess of faithfulness. A dictaphone in a Pullman smoker between New York and Chillicothe might record its exact analogue.

Burlesque there is in Lewis, but when we try to put a finger on it, in Babbitt's speech before the Real Estate Board, Luke Dawson's opinions on labor unions, or "Old Jud"'s Y.M.C.A. evangelism, it is embarrassingly apt to melt away and turn into realism. Mainly it is a matter of proportion rather than detail. Not very often does it get out of hand, as in Elmer Gantry's persistent lubricity and his innumerable repetitions of the lyrical Star of Love sermon he has stolen from the pages of the atheistical Robert

G. Ingersoll. Still less often does Lewis's burlesque lose contact with reality altogether, as it does in portraying the appalling Cornplow children in The Prodigal Parents. *On such occasions it is a weakness; elsewhere its suggestive emphases and omissions merely reinforce the realism and add up to violent destruction.*

Main Street *builds a formidable indictment against the small town and the narrowness of its horizons. In its business section patchwork ugliness and crude greed· the Minnimashie House, with unclean floors and brass cuspidors, its dining room "a jungle of stained table cloths and catsup bottles"; Dyer's Drug Store, with its "greasy marble soda fountain" and "electric lamp of red and green and curdled yellow mosaic shade"; the Bon-Ton Clothing Store with glossless suits "flabbily draped on dummies like human corpses with painted cheeks." In its social life, backbiting, intolerance resentful of criticism, crudity, hatred of superiority. The Jolly Seventeen look on themselves as smart and emancipated, and ooze with jealous gossip; the Thanatopsis Club pays the English poets the honor of patronizing them with a ten-minute paper; the prying curiosity and furtive salaciousness of the Widow Bogart are echoed in her son Cy and the village gang sniggering nastinesses in barns and smacking moist lips at girls passing the local poolroom. Everywhere are professional and commercial fears, rivalries, hatreds, and treacheries beneath the backslapping; everywhere a hatred of nonconformity, a cheap contempt for culture.*

Babbitt *enlarges the scope of this attack. The business district of Zenith is a pious emulation of New York, and there is a grandiose Athletic Club filled with pudgy paunches, but Zenith is only a magnified Main Street. The prosperous middle classes of its suburbs are only the Haydocks and Nat Hickses with a thin veneer; its country-club aristocracy of wealth more slickly streamlined Sam Clarkes. Its doings and desires, in obedience to Veblen's canon of conspicuous consumption, are dominated by tiled bathrooms, electric toasters, automobile gadgets, movies and radios, "keeping up with the Joneses," conforming to the conventionally expected in hearty bad manners, standardized opinions, and go-getting rapacity. But underneath, a deep emptiness and fear hide from themselves by rigid regimentation, and leap with snarling ferocity on any suspected nonconformist. Babbitt's timid and abortive rebellion against the standards of the pack is immediately smelled out, resented, and crushed, the sinister Vergil Gunch silent and frightening in the background.*

Arrowsmith *reveals the same cowardice and materialism undermining*

the integrity of medicine from the village G. P. to the smart surgeon, the big-shot diagnostician, and the research scientist: even the great McGurk Institute is polluted by the slimy spirit of business enterprise, making "discovery" a hasty scramble for newspaper notoriety. Elmer Gantry *fails to accomplish a like analysis of the clergy because Lewis became so angry delineating Gantry as a brute, bully, liar, and lecher that he lost sight of the institution in hatred of the individual. Clergymen caught in Gantry's most noisome exploits are not the deficiencies of the Church; the same things could probably be established of high-school principals and gas-bill collectors without these being the faults in secondary education and public utilities.*

The weakness in Lewis is thus not the weakness of diatribe as a method. It lies, rather, in Lewis's failure to analyze his own subject far enough. Less clear cut and less fatal than in Elmer Gantry, *it blurs even the achievement of* Main Street *and* Babbitt. *It was certain that Lewis hated and despised the philistinism he depicted through Carol Kennicott's eyes, and yet he handled her with increasing patronage and derision as well. What did he mean by it? Was he contemptuous of her too? Was he sneering at the concept of culture no less than at the meanness and emptiness of Gopher Prairie's spiritual life? Observe that there is no such ambiguity in Flaubert's rejection of* both *Emma Bovary and Yonville; Flaubert implies a standard by which both are judged. But deep-rooted in Lewis there is an inward confusion. He is so entangled in both Carol and the village that he is a part of both, and is still content to see with the eyes of neither.*

This is, I think, the truth about Lewis, the source of his satire, the source both of his resounding triumph when he succeeds and of his failure when he fails. Great satire, like all great literature, gains part of its strength from the tension of inner conflict. But only when the conflict is clearly defined, not when it breaks down in confusion. In Babbitt, *Lewis distinguishes between the pity and sympathy with which he looks into the frustrated hearts of all the Babbitts in the world and the condemnation he feels for the false gods by whom they are debauched and the fears that confine them within a hollow ritual. With what consummate irony he shows the Babbitt family high-hatting the unsuccessful Overbrooks in precisely the same way they had felt such bitter heartburnings at having to take from the big-shot McKelveys! How skillfully he parallels the goals and ambitions of the middle-aged Babbitt with those of his adolescent high-school son Ted, and shows that they dwell on the same level of*

maturity. It is this fusion of sympathy with clear-sighted understanding that gives Babbitt *its pre-eminence among Lewis's books.*

Lewis's significance, in a way, lies in the fact that in both his insights and his dilemmas he is characteristically American. He believes, together with most of the American people, that powerful interests can coexist with disinterestedness. He believes that people ought to be capable of being brought to tolerance and decency by philosophic reason instead of resisting every threat to their prejudices or their ease with every weapon at their command. He combines the mental outlook, the crude independence of the roughneck pioneer with the social and cultural aspirations of nineteenth-century liberalism: as if he were Huckleberry Finn and Matthew Arnold in one gangling body. He despises literary ballyhoo with the distaste of a New England Brahmin, and manages to grab the limelight to proclaim it with all the delicacy of a sideshow barker. At one moment the heir of Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola, at the next the brother of Bruce Barton and Ivy Lee, ambiguously of a piece with his own heroes, he is at once man of letters and go-getting businessman, the epitome of his country in a red-knuckled dynamo of blatant genius.

⁂ *Babbitt* was published in 1922. The selection given here consists of sections 4 and 5 of Chapter IV and section 1 of Chapter V ⁂

Forenoon of an Honest Financial Racketeer

HIS MORNING was not sharply marked into divisions. Interwoven with correspondence and advertisement-writing were a thousand nervous details: calls from clerks who were incessantly and hopefully seeking five furnished rooms and bath at sixty dollars a month, advice to Mat Penniman on getting money out of tenants who had no money.

Babbitt's virtues as a real-estate broker—as the servant of society in the department of finding homes for families and shops for distributors of food—were steadiness and diligence. He was conventionally honest, he kept his records of buyers and sellers complete, he had experience with leases and titles and an excellent memory for prices. His shoulders were broad enough, his voice deep enough, his relish of hearty humor strong enough, to establish him as one of the ruling caste of Good Fellows. Yet his eventual importance to mankind was perhaps lessened by his large and complacent ignorance of all architecture save the types of houses turned out by speculative builders; all landscape gardening save the use of curving roads, grass, and six ordinary shrubs; and all the commonest axioms of economics. He serenely believed that the one purpose of the real-estate business was to make money for George F. Babbitt. True, it was a good advertisement at Boosters' Club lunches, and all the varieties of Annual Banquets to which Good Fellows were invited, to speak sonorously of Unselfish Public Service, the Broker's Obligation to Keep Inviolate the Trust of His Clients, and a thing called Ethics, whose nature was confusing but if you had it you were a High-class Realtor and if you hadn't you were a shyster, a piker, and a fly-by-night. These virtues awakened Confidence, and enabled you to handle Bigger Propositions. But they didn't imply that you were to be impractical and refuse to take twice the value of a house if a buyer was such an idiot that he didn't jew you down on the asking-price.

Babbitt spoke well—and often—at these orgies of commercial righteousness about the "realtor's function as a seer of the future development of the community, and as a prophetic engineer clearing the pathway for inevitable changes"—which meant that a real-estate broker could make money by

guessing which way the town would grow. This guessing he called Vision.

In an address at the Boosters' Club he had admitted, "It is at once the duty and the privilege of the realtor to know everything about his own city and its environs. Where a surgeon is a specialist on every vein and mysterious cell of the human body, and the engineer upon electricity in all its phases, or every bolt of some great bridge majestically arching o'er a mighty flood, the realtor must know his city, inch by inch, and all its faults and virtues."

Though he did know the market-price, inch by inch, of certain districts of Zenith, he did not know whether the police force was too large or too small, or whether it was in alliance with gambling and prostitution. He knew the means of fire-proofing buildings and the relation of insurance-rates to fire-proofing, but he did not know how many firemen there were in the city, how they were trained and paid, or how complete their apparatus. He sang eloquently the advantages of proximity of school-buildings to rentable homes, but he did not know—he did not know that it was worth while to know—whether the city schoolrooms were properly heated, lighted, ventilated, furnished; he did not know how the teachers were chosen; and though he chanted "One of the boasts of Zenith is that we pay our teachers adequately," that was because he had read the statement in the *Advocate-Times*. Himself, he could not have given the average salary of teachers in Zenith or anywhere else.

He had heard it said that "conditions" in the County Jail and the Zenith City Prison were not very "scientific"; he had, with indignation at the criticism of Zenith, skimmed through a report in which the notorious pessimist Seneca Doane, the radical lawyer, asserted that to throw boys and young girls into a bull-pen crammed with men suffering from syphilis, delirium tremens, and insanity was not the perfect way of educating them. He had controverted the report by growling, "Folks that think a jail ought to be a bloomin' Hotel Thornleigh make me sick. If people don't like a jail, let 'em behave 'emselves and keep out of it. Besides, these reform cranks always exaggerate." That was the beginning and quite completely the end of his investigations into Zenith's charities and corrections; and as to the "vice districts" he brightly expressed it, "Those are things that no decent man monkeys with. Besides, smatter fact, I'll tell *you* confidentially: it's a protection to our daughters and to decent women to have a district where tough nuts can raise cain. Keeps 'em away from our own homes."

As to industrial conditions, however, Babbitt had thought a great deal, and his opinions may be coördinated as follows:

"A good labor union is of value because it keeps out radical unions, which would destroy property. No one ought to be forced to belong to a union,

however. All labor agitators who try to force men to join a union should be hanged. In fact, just between ourselves, there oughtn't to be any unions allowed at all, and as it's the best way of fighting the unions, every business man ought to belong to an employers'-association and to the Chamber of Commerce. In union there is strength. So any selfish hog who doesn't join the Chamber of Commerce ought to be forced to."

In nothing—as the expert on whose advice families moved to new neighborhoods to live there for a generation—was Babbitt more splendidly innocent than in the science of sanitation. He did not know a malaria-bearing mosquito from a bat; he knew nothing about tests of drinking water, and in the matters of plumbing and sewage he was as unlearned as he was voluble. He often referred to the excellence of the bathrooms in the houses he sold He was fond of explaining why it was that no European ever bathed. Some one had told him, when he was twenty-two, that all cesspools were unhealthy, and he still denounced them. If a client impertinently wanted him to sell a house which had a cesspool, Babbitt always spoke about it—before accepting the house and selling it.

When he laid out the Glen Oriole acreage development, when he ironed woodland and dipping meadow into a glenless, orioleless, sunburnt flat prickly with small boards displaying the names of imaginary streets, he righteously put in a complete sewage-system. It made him feel superior; it enabled him to sneer privily at the Martin Lumsen development, Avonlea, which had a cesspool; and it provided a chorus for the full-page advertisements in which he announced the beauty, convenience, cheapness, and supererogatory healthfulness of Glen Oriole. The only flaw was that the Glen Oriole sewers had insufficient outlet, so that waste remained in them, not very agreeably, while the Avonlea cesspool was a Waring septic tank.

The whole of the Glen Oriole project was a suggestion that Babbitt, though he really did hate men recognized as swindlers, was not too unreasonably honest. Operators and buyers prefer that brokers should not be in competition with them as operators and buyers themselves, but attend to their clients' interests only. It was supposed that the Babbitt-Thompson Company were merely agents for Glen Oriole, serving the real owner, Jake Offutt, but the fact was that Babbitt and Thompson owned sixty-two per cent. of the Glen, the president and purchasing agent of the Zenith Street Traction Company owned twenty-eight per cent , and Jake Offutt (a gang-politician, a small manufacturer, a tobacco-chewing old farceur who enjoyed dirty politics, business diplomacy, and cheating at poker) had only ten per cent., which Babbitt and the Traction officials had given to him for "fixing" health inspectors and fire inspectors and a member of the State Transportation Commission.

But Babbitt was virtuous. He advocated, though he did not practise, the prohibition of alcohol; he praised, though he did not obey, the laws against motor-speeding, he paid his debts, he contributed to the church, the Red Cross, and the Y. M. C. A.; he followed the custom of his clan and cheated only as it was sanctified by precedent; and he never descended to trickery—though, as he explained to Paul Riesling:

"Course I don't mean to say that every ad I write is literally true or that I always believe everything I say when I give some buyer a good strong selling-spiel. You see—you see it's like this: In the first place, maybe the owner of the property exaggerated when he put it into my hands, and it certainly isn't my place to go proving my principal a liar! And then most folks are so darn crooked themselves that they expect a fellow to do a little lying, so if I was fool enough to never whoop the ante I'd get the credit for lying anyway! In self-defense I got to toot my own horn, like a lawyer defending a client—his bounden duty, ain't it, to bring out the poor dub's good points? Why, the Judge himself would bawl out a lawyer that didn't, even if they both knew the guy was guilty! But even so, I don't pad out the truth like Cecil Rountree or Thayer or the rest of these realtors. Fact, I think a fellow that's willing to deliberately up and profit by lying ought to be shot!"

Babbitt's value to his clients was rarely better shown than this morning, in the conference at eleven-thirty between himself, Conrad Lyte, and Archibald Purdy.

Conrad Lyte was a real-estate speculator. He was a nervous speculator. *Before* he gambled he consulted bankers, lawyers, architects, contracting builders, and all of their clerks and stenographers who were willing to be cornered and give him advice. He was a bold entrepreneur, and he desired nothing more than complete *safety in his investments, freedom* from attention to details, and the thirty or forty per cent. profit which, according to all authorities, a pioneer deserves for his risks and foresight. He was a stubby man with a cap-like mass of short gray curls and clothes which, no matter how well cut, seemed shaggy. Below his eyes were semicircular hollows, as though silver dollars had been pressed against them and had left an imprint.

Particularly and always Lyte consulted Babbitt, and trusted in his slow cautiousness.

Six months ago Babbitt had learned that one Archibald Purdy, a grocer in the indecisive residential district known as Linton, was talking of opening a butcher shop beside his grocery. Looking up the ownership of adjoining parcels of land, Babbitt found that Purdy owned his present shop but did not own the one available lot adjoining. He advised Conrad Lyte to purchase

this lot, for eleven thousand dollars, though an appraisal on a basis of rents did not indicate its value as above nine thousand. The rents, declared Babbitt, were too low; and by waiting they could make Purdy come to their price. (This was Vision.) He had to bully Lyte into buying. His first act as agent for Lyte was to increase the rent of the battered store-building on the lot. The tenant said a number of rude things, but he paid.

Now, Purdy seemed ready to buy, and his delay was going to cost him ten thousand extra dollars—the reward paid by the community to Mr. Conrad Lyte for the virtue of employing a broker who had Vision and who understood Talking Points, Strategic Values, Key Situations, Underappraisals, and the Psychology of Salesmanship.

Lyte came to the conference exultantly. He was fond of Babbitt, this morning, and called him "old hoss." Purdy, the grocer, a long-nosed man and solemn, seemed to care less for Babbitt and for Vision, but Babbitt met him at the street door of the office and guided him toward the private room with affectionate little cries of "This way, Brother Purdy!" He took from the correspondence-file the entire box of cigars and forced them on his guests. He pushed their chairs two inches forward and three inches back, which gave him an hospitable note, and then leaned back in his desk-chair and looked plump and jolly. But he spoke to the weakling grocer with firmness

"Well, Brother Purdy, we been having some pretty tempting offers from butchers and a slew of other folks for that lot next to your store, but I persuaded Brother Lyte that we ought to give you a shot at the property first. I said to Lyte, 'It'd be a rotten shame,' I said, 'if somebody went and opened a combination grocery and meat market right next door and ruined Purdy's nice little business.' Especially—" Babbitt leaned forward, and his voice was harsh, "—it would be hard luck if one of these cash-and-carry chain-stores got in there and started cutting prices below cost till they got rid of competition and forced you to the wall!"

Purdy snatched his thin hands from his pockets, pulled up his trousers, thrust his hands back into his pockets, tilted in the heavy oak chair, and tried to look amused, as he struggled·

"Yes, they're bad competition. But I guess you don't realize the Pulling Power that Personality has in a neighborhood business."

The great Babbitt smiled. "That's so. Just as you feel, old man. We thought we'd give you first chance. All right then—"

"Now look here!" Purdy wailed. "I know f'r a fact that a piece of property 'bout same size, right near, sold for less 'n eighty-five hundred, 'twa'n't two years ago, and here you fellows are asking me twenty-four thousand dollars! Why, I'd have to mortgage— I wouldn't mind so much

twelve thousand but— Why good God, Mr. Babbitt, you're asking more 'n twice its value! And threatening to ruin me if I don't take it!"

"Purdy, I don't like your way of talking! I don't like it one little bit! Supposing Lyte and I were stinking enough to want to ruin any fellow human, don't you suppose we know it's to our own selfish interest to have everybody in Zenith prosperous? But all this is beside the point. Tell you what we'll do: We'll come down to twenty-three thousand—five thousand down and the rest on mortgage—and if you want to wreck the old shack and rebuild, I guess I can get Lyte here to loosen up for a building-mortgage on good liberal terms. Heavens, man, we'd be glad to oblige you! We don't like these foreign grocery trusts any better 'n you do! But it isn't reasonable to expect us to sacrifice eleven thousand or more just for neighborliness, *is* it! How about it, Lyte? You willing to come down?"

By warmly taking Purdy's part, Babbitt persuaded the benevolent Mr. Lyte to reduce his price to twenty-one thousand dollars. At the right moment Babbitt snatched from a drawer the agreement he had had Miss McGoun type out a week ago and thrust it into Purdy's hands. He genially shook his fountain pen to make certain that it was flowing, handed it to Purdy, and approvingly watched him sign.

The work of the world was being done. Lyte had made something over nine thousand dollars, Babbitt had *made* a four-hundred-and-fifty-dollar commission, Purdy had, by the sensitive mechanism of modern finance, been provided with a business-building, and soon the happy inhabitants of Linton would have meat lavished upon them at prices only a little higher than those down-town.

It had been a manly battle, but after it Babbitt drooped. This was the only really amusing contest he had been planning. There was nothing ahead save details of leases, appraisals, mortgages.

He muttered, "Makes me sick to think of Lyte carrying off most of the profit when I did all the work, the old skinflint! And— What else have I got to do to-day? . . . Like to take a good long vacation. Motor trip. Something."

He sprang up, rekindled by the thought of lunching with Paul Riesling.

Babbitt's preparations for leaving the office to its feeble self during the hour and a half of his lunch-period were somewhat less elaborate than the plans for a general European war.

He fretted to Miss McGoun, "What time you going to lunch? Well, make sure Miss Bannigan is in then. Explain to her that if Wiedenfeldt calls up, she's to tell him I'm already having the title traced. And oh, b' the way, remind me to-morrow to have Penniman trace it. Now if anybody comes in looking for a cheap house, remember we got to shove that Bangor Road

place off onto somebody. If you need me, I'll be at the Athletic Club. And—uh— And—uh— I'll be back by two."

He dusted the cigar-ashes off his vest. He placed a difficult unanswered letter on the pile of unfinished work, that he might not fail to attend to it that afternoon. (For three noons, now, he had placed the same letter on the unfinished pile.) He scrawled on a sheet of yellow backing-paper the memorandum: "See abt apt h drs," which gave him an agreeable feeling of having already seen about the apartment-house doors.

He discovered that he was smoking another cigar. He threw it away, protesting, "Darn it, I thought you'd quit this darn smoking!" He courageously returned the cigar-box to the correspondence-file, locked it up, hid the key in a more difficult place, and raged, "Ought to take care of myself. And need more exercise—walk to the club, every single noon—just what I'll do—every noon—cut out this motoring all the time."

The resolution made him feel exemplary. Immediately after it he decided that this noon it was too late to walk.

It took but little more time to start his car and edge it into the traffic than it would have taken to walk the three and a half blocks to the club.

HATE IN ALDOUS HUXLEY



THERE IS *a Beerbohm caricature of Aldous Huxley, in which all the energy is gathered into the enormous dome of brow, the rampant hair, and the chill glare of spectacles, with the body drooping down languidly like limp vermicelli It corresponds to a widespread conception of Huxley as a critical intellect, detached and somewhat inimically disinterested. It is, indeed, the image Huxley has of himself. He "observes the facts," "records them" "as a field naturalist"—the image he presents of Philip Quarles, his self-portrait in* Point Counter Point, *who understands everything mentally, but tries in vain to escape out of his icy intellectuality into the warmth of vivid feeling. Emotionally frigid, electrically intellectual such is the view of Huxley that has been imposed upon the world. But in its primary emphasis it is almost entirely false.*

Huxley's real animus is sharply emotional. And that emotion—in his hands both sword and creative force—is hatred. Other moods weave in and out. mental acrobatics, philosophic seriousness, irony, laughter, a glimmering touch of beauty—even, at times, a faint frustrated tenderness· but hatred is dominant. Hatred of stupidity, affectation, and hypocrisy, hatred of prejudice and cruelty; hatred of the ignorant and squalid poor, of the stodgy middle class, of the snobbish, vulgar, and cowardly rich. In dozens of forms—fantasia, wit, burlesque, blasphemy—but violent in all, it runs through his work. This violence, like the violence Huxley significantly finds

in Swift, is a positively visceral revulsion, emerging in an imagery startlingly often derived from diseased states of the body, worms, beetles, and the lower forms of life, slime and filth, dunghills and sewage, the excreta of bladder and bowels.

Like most violent haters, Huxley is a moralist as well. In temperament he is a puritan, and looks on men's excesses with the vindictive sadism of a Calvin or of those Fathers of the Church whose sulphurous Latin he enjoys quoting. He shares their distrust of sex, handling it in his novels chiefly as a source of humiliation and pain. Its phases of disgust, torment, cruelty, bitterness, and breakdown are those he dwells upon, the bleak emergence from passion, "after the fireworks"; he rings all the variations on the mood of post-coitum-triste. *Beside the fascinated revulsion with which he views this theme he is almost indulgent to the vices of drink and drugs, to foolishness and sloth, and to the drug addiction to films and radio. Intellectually Huxley knows that greed, pride, and love of power bring about evils far more hideous and widespread than those of sex. But in his novels, as if they were indited by a sophisticated monk of the Thebaid, lubricity is excoriated as the worst of vices.*

In Huxley's earliest poems and stories hatred takes the forms of disillusioned hilarity and of cool and savage detachment. Crome Yellow, *the first of the novels, and a hydrogenous prelude to Huxley's more angry satire, is all sharp spirits and ferocious burlesque, a maliciously witty dissection of human weaknesses in general. The sophisticated pretense of derisive calm smashed, however, once and for all, in the fury of* Antic Hay. *This novel is a verbal machine-gun attack on a whole circumference of evils in contemporary society: on politics and politicians, the rapacity of modern business, the unscrupulousness of advertising methods, and the exploitation of the poor, on the ideals of freedom and individualism, on intellectualism and pretentiousness, on pseudo aestheticism in art and literature, on the emptiness and spiritual cowardice of the cultivated and wealthy.*

And above all—with the burning intensity of an Old Testament prophet—it is a ferocious castigation of promiscuity, of the endless and goatish preoccupation with sex. Nearly all the characters, like a race of hypercivilized satyrs, are dancing the "antic hay" of lust. Rosie, with her elegant legs, progressing from Gumbril's blond beard to Mercaptan's billowing divan and winding up in the bloody and blasphemous embraces of Coleman, Mercaptan consummating his grossly civilized amours on his dix-

huitième *sofa (a mercaptan, in chemistry, is one of a class of compounds with an exceptionally foul smell); Coleman trying to vitalize into renewed significance what has become for him merely a dirty habit by smearing it with horror and filth; Gumbril even with Emily remembering past fornications and Rosie's pink lingerie.*

Gumbril is both the lens through which this world is seen and the primary specimen in its analysis. He is cultivated in the polite attainments, enjoys Derain, Ingres, Picasso, Schonberg, plays the piano passably, can nod understandingly to the names of Freud, Heisenberg, Einstein. Brought up and mingling with the wealthy, but not one of them, he has acquired their tastes and their luxuries; his attitude toward them is a mixture of envy, indignation, and rebellious snobbery, part theoretical radicalism, part would-be emulation. He has stirrings of vague humanitarian sentiment, but they are quenched by cynicism and the yearning for luxury; they lead him no further than an impulsive donation to misery or the perpetration of an epigram.

Gumbril feels and reveres the greatness of beauty and goodness, and he is unable to sacrifice the pleasure of a moment to either; he loathes his own swinishness and wallows in the sty he has dirtied. He will throw away an idyllic love for a luncheon of sophisticated clowning, and despise humanity for the vileness he sees smeared in his own heart, all the while grimacing with a self-conscious grin to deprecate his hatred of what he finds there. He is frivolous, selfish, spineless, bereft of faith and ideals, empty, spiritually damned. He is the homme moyen sensuel *of his world*

Antic Hay *is a modern* Inferno, *with Huxley a bright and urbanely bitter Virgil invisibly conducting us down the descending spirals of its lurid futility. From mere contempt the mood becomes ever more violent as the scenes move from lacquered farce to an accelerating galvanic horror. The wit and gaiety of Mr. Bojanus analyzing the uselessness of revolutions and Mr. Boldero on advertising psychology give way to Coleman's ferocious laugh and invocation of "one devil, father quasi-almighty, Samael and his wife, the Woman of Whoredom," his sadism and bloodstained fornications. Leaving behind us the serenity of Gumbril's shadowy, enchanted, candlelit room, we follow the episodes through the depths of degradation and despair: the japing luncheon betrayal, the raucous hideousness of the nightclub scene, the defilement of that chamber where Emily had lain in Gumbril's arms, the nightmare taxi ride interminably back and forth across London while the sky signs of Piccadilly gibber epileptically and*

meaninglessly, and all the while Huxley drowns the narrative in furious and annihilating laughter.

These violences are seen in most of Huxley's subsequent work as well. in Brief Candles, *with its attack on a self-mutilating idealism, in* Brave New World *and its repudiation of mechanized ideals, totalitarianism, and cold-hearted promiscuity, in the all-embracing rejections of* Point Counter Point. *Huxley pours a terrible skill into the portraits of pompous old Sidney Quarles and his nasty, parsimonious, and secret liaisons, and Burlap, with his sluglike copulations, and Lucy Tantamount pursuing what she calls "fun" to the stage of random couplings in cheap hotels. The prevailing tone of all these novels is that of sophisticated modern man flaying the world that is his own creation and spiritual home.*

Eyeless in Gaza *and* After Many a Summer Dies the Swan *reveal a change in doctrine and what purports to be a change of heart. Love and understanding, Huxley now proclaims, are the highest virtues and the deepest wisdom. These ideas are, I believe, profoundly true; but Huxley does not exemplify them. The new doctrine is love, but these tracts in favor of love are filled with hate. Anthony Beavis, the hero of* Eyeless in Gaza, *exhibits no love for Brian, who was supposed to be his friend, no love for Helen his mistress, no love for the disintegrating wreck of Mrs. Amberly.* After Many a Summer *simmers with animosity hate for old Jo Stoyte's slobbering semi-incestuous passion for his "Baby," hate for the Hollywood Baby herself, gloating in the sexual humiliations to which she is subjected by the ferocious Dr. Obispo, hate, finally, echoing through Obispo's metallic laughter in the last fetid pages of the book.*

This confusion between surface sweetness and light and the secret, unavowed persistence of hatred explains the crippling of these two novels as literary art. They are not works of love, as Huxley believes, but strangely distorted and confused works of hate. Hence an inward division, a deep unconscious dishonesty, an antagonism of motives, that means inevitable failure. A writer's inward conflicts may sharpen and clarify his insight. But they must be conflicts, not confusions. No lucid work of art can emerge from muddled aims.

There is no such uncertainty of aim in the works before Eyeless in Gaza. *In them, hate is a constructive weapon. Not so great and wonderful a creative force, certainly, as the love and pity and understanding that humanizes the art of Tolstoy, of Euripides, of Shakespeare. but a flaming sword attacking evil. In Huxley's best work hate is forged into a single*

tempered weapon of destruction. Its dissections of inward weakness and division, of one-sided intellectualism, of the sickness of self, reveal deep-seated maladies of our age. Reading, we are both Actaeon and pursuing hounds. In the greatest satire, the vision is always double, forcing the reader to contemplate those failings that are universal in us, making his hatred self-hatred. Antic Hay *and* Point Counter Point *fall within this higher and more difficult domain.*

ANTIC HAY

⁂ *Antic Hay* was published in 1923 The selection given here is Chapter 10 complete ⁂

A Sales-Campaign for Balloon-Seated Trousers

MR. BOLDERO liked the idea of the Patent Small Clothes. He liked it immensely, he said, immensely.

"There's money in it," he said.

Mr. Boldero was a small dark man of about forty-five, active as a bird and with a bird's brown beady eyes, a bird's sharp nose. He was always busy, always had twenty different irons in the fire at once, was always fresh, clear-headed, never tired. He was also always unpunctual, always untidy. He had no sense of time or of order. But he got away with it, as he liked to say. He delivered the goods—or rather the goods, in the convenient form of cash, delivered themselves, almost miraculously it always seemed, to him.

He was like a bird in appearance. But in mind, Gumbril found, after having seen him once or twice, he was like a caterpillar. he ate all that was put before him, he consumed a hundred times his own mental weight every day. Other people's ideas, other people's knowledge—they were his food. He devoured them and they were at once his own. All that belonged to other people he annexed without a scruple or a second thought, quite naturally, as though it were already his own. And he absorbed it so rapidly and completely, he laid public claim to it so promptly that he sometimes deceived people into believing that he had really anticipated them in their ideas, that he had known for years and years the things they had just been telling him and which he would at once airily repeat to them with the perfect assurance of one who knows—knows by instinct, as it were, by inheritance.

At their first luncheon he had asked Gumbril to tell him all about modern painting. Gumbril had given him a brief lecture, before the savoury had appeared on the table, Mr. Boldero was talking with perfect familiarity of Picasso and Derain. He almost made it understood that he had a fine collection of their works in his drawing-room at home. Being a trifle deaf, however, he was not very good at names and Gumbril's all too tactful corrections were lost on him He could not be induced to abandon his Bacosso in favour of any other version of the Spaniard's name. Bacosso—why, he had known all about Bacosso since he was a schoolboy! Bacosso was an old master, already.

Mr. Boldero was very severe with the waiters and knew so well how things ought to be done at a good restaurant, that Gumbril felt sure he must recently have lunched with some meticulous gormandizer of the old school. And when the waiter made as though to serve them with brandy in small glasses, Mr. Boldero was so passionately indignant that he sent for the manager.

"Do you mean to tell me," he shouted in a perfect frenzy of righteous anger, "that you don't yet know how brandy ought to be drunk?"

Perhaps it was only last week that he himself, Gumbril reflected, had learned to aerate his cognac in Gargantuan beakers.

Meanwhile, of course, the Patent Small Clothes were not neglected. As soon as he had been told about the things, Mr. Boldero began speaking of them with a perfect and practised familiarity. They were already *his*, mentally his. And it was only Mr. Boldero's generosity that prevented him from making the Small Clothes more effectively his own.

"If it weren't for the friendship and respect which I feel for your father, Mr. Gumbril," he said, twinkling genially over the brandy, "I'd just annex your Small Clothes Bag and baggage. Just annex them."

"Ah, but they're my patent," said Gumbril. "Or at least they're *in process* of being patented. The agents are at work."

Mr. Boldero laughed. "Do you suppose that would trouble me if I wanted to be unscrupulous? I'd just take the idea and manufacture the article. You'd bring an action. I'd have it defended with all the professional erudition that could be bought. You'd find yourself let in for a case that might cost thousands. And how would you pay for it? You'd be *forced* to come to an agreement out of court, Mr. Gumbril. That's what you'd *have* to do. And a damned bad agreement it would be for you, I can tell you." Mr. Boldero laughed very cheerfully at the thought of the badness of this agreement. "But don't be alarmed," he said. "I shan't do it, you know."

Gumbril was not wholly reassured. Tactfully, he tried to find out what terms Mr. Boldero was prepared to offer. Mr. Boldero was nebulously vague.

They met again in Gumbril's rooms. The contemporary drawings on the walls reminded Mr. Boldero that he was now an art expert. *He* told Gumbril all about it—in Gumbril's own words. Every now and then, it was true, Mr. Boldero made a little slip. Bacosso, for example, remained unshakeably Bacosso. But on the whole the performance was most impressive. It made Gumbril feel very uncomfortable, however, while it lasted. For he recognised in this characteristic of Mr. Boldero a horrible caricature of himself. He too was an assimilator; more discriminating, no doubt, more tactful, knowing better than Mr. Boldero how to turn the assimilated ex-

perience into something new and truly his own; but still a caterpillar, definitely a caterpillar. He began studying Mr. Boldero with a close and disgustful attention, as one might pore over some repulsive *memento mori.*

It was a relief when Mr. Boldero stopped talking art and consented to get down to business. Gumbril was wearing for the occasion the sample pair of Small Clothes which Mr. Bojanus had made for him. For Mr. Boldero's benefit he put them, so to speak, through their paces. He allowed himself to drop with a bump on to the floor--arriving there bruiseless and unjarred. He sat in complete comfort for minutes at a stretch on the edge of the ornamental iron fender. In the intervals he paraded up and down before Mr. Boldero like a mannequin. "A trifle bulgy," said Mr. Boldero. "But still . . ." He was, taking it all round, favourably impressed. It was time, he said, to begin thinking of details. They would have to begin by making experiments with the bladders to discover a model, combining, as Mr. Boldero put it, "maximum efficiency with minimum bulge." When they had found the right thing, they would have it made in suitable quantities by any good rubber firm. As for the trousers themselves, they could rely for those on sweated female labour in the East End. "Cheap and good," said Mr. Boldero.

"It sounds ideal," said Gumbril.

"And then," said Mr. Boldero, "there's our advertising campaign. On that I may say," he went on with a certain solemnity, "will depend the failure or success of our enterprise. I consider it of the first importance."

"Quite," said Gumbril, nodding importantly and with intelligence.

"We must set to work," said Mr. Boldero, "sci-en-tifically." Gumbril nodded again.

"We have to appeal," Mr. Boldero went on so glibly that Gumbril felt sure he must be quoting somebody else's words, "to the great instincts and feelings of humanity . . . They are the source of action. They spend the money, if I may put it like that . . ."

"That's all very well," said Gumbril. "But how do you propose to appeal to the most important of the instincts? I refer, as you may well imagine, to sex."

"I was just going to come to that," said Mr. Boldero, raising his hand as though to ask for a patient hearing. "Alas, we can't. I don't see any way of hanging our Small Clothes on the sexual peg."

"Then we are undone," said Gumbril, too, dramatically.

"No, no." Mr. Boldero was reassuring. "You make the error of the Viennese. You exaggerate the importance of sex. After all, my dear Mr. Gumbril, there is also the instinct of self-preservation; there is also," he leaned forward, wagging his finger, "the social instinct, the instinct of the herd."

"True."

"Both of them as powerful as sex. What are the Professor's famous Censors but forbidding suggestions from the herd without, made powerful and entrenched by the social instinct within?"

Gumbril had no answer; Mr. Boldero continued, smiling.

"So that we shall be all right if we stick to self-preservation and the herd. Rub in the comfort and utility, the hygienic virtues of our Small Clothes, that will catch their self-preservatory feelings. Aim at their dread of public opinion, at their ambition to be one better than their fellows and their terror of being different—at all the ludicrous weaknesses a well-developed social instinct exposes them to. We shall get them, if we set to work scientifically . . ." Mr. Boldero's bird-like eyes twinkled very brightly. "We shall get them," he repeated and he laughed a happy little laugh, full of such a child-like diabolism, such an innocent gay malignity that it seemed as though a little leprechaun had suddenly taken the financier's place in Gumbril's best arm-chair.

Gumbril laughed too; for this leprechaunish mirth was infectious. "We shall get them," he echoed. "Oh, I'm sure we shall, if you set about it, Mr. Boldero."

Mr. Boldero acknowledged the compliment with a smile that expressed no false humility. It was his due and he knew it.

"I'll give you some of my ideas about the advertising campaign," he said. "Just to give you a notion. You can think them over, quietly, and make suggestions."

"Yes, yes," said Gumbril, nodding.

Mr. Boldero cleared his throat. "We shall begin," he said, "by making the most simple elementary appeal to their instinct of self-preservation: we shall point out that the Patent Small Clothes are comfortable, that to wear them is to avoid pain. A few striking slogans about comfort—that's all we want. Very simple indeed. It doesn't take much to persuade a man that it's pleasanter to sit on air than on wood. But while we're on the subject of hard seats we shall have to glide off subtly at a tangent to make a flank attack on the social instincts." And joining the tip of his forefinger to the tip of his thumb, Mr. Boldero moved his hand delicately sideways, as though he were sliding it along a smooth brass rail. "We shall have to speak about the glories and the trials of sedentary labour. We must exalt its spiritual dignity and at the same time condemn its physical discomforts. 'The seat of honour,' don't you know. We could talk about that. 'The Seats of the Mighty.' 'The seat that rules the office rocks the world.' All those lines might be made something of. And then we could have little historical chats about thrones; how dignified, but how uncomfortable they've been. We must make the

bank clerk and the civil servant feel proud of being what they are and at the same time feel ashamed that, being such splendid people, they should have to submit to the indignity of having blistered hindquarters. In modern advertising you must flatter your public—not in the oily, abject, tradesman-like style of the old advertisers, crawling before clients who were their social superiors, that's all over now. It's we who are the social superiors—because we've got more money than the bank clerks and the civil servants Our modern flattery must be manly, straightforward, sincere, the admiration of equal for equal—all the more flattering as we aren't equals" Mr. Boldero laid a finger to his nose. "They're dirt and we're capitalists . . ." He laughed.

Gumbril laughed too. It was the first time that he had ever thought of himself as a capitalist, and the thought was exhilarating.

"We flatter them," went on Mr. Boldero. "We say that honest work is glorious and ennobling—which it isn't, it's merely dull and cretinising And then we go on to suggest that it would be finer still, more ennobling, because less uncomfortable, if they wore Gumbril's Patent Small Clothes. You see the line?"

Gumbril saw the line.

"After that," said Mr. Boldero, "we get on to the medical side of the matter. The medical side, Mr. Gumbril—that's most important. Nobody feels really well nowadays—at any rate nobody who lives in a big town and does the kind of loathsome work that the people we're catering for do. Keeping this fact before our eyes, we have to make it clear that only those can expect to be healthy who wear pneumatic trousers."

"That will be a little difficult, won't it?" questioned Gumbril.

"Not a bit of it!" Mr. Boldero laughed with an infectious confidence. "All we have to do is to talk about the great nerve centres of the spine· the shocks they get when you sit down too hard, the wearing exhaustion to which long-protracted sitting on unpadded seats subject them. We'll have to talk very scientifically about the great lumbar ganglia—if there are such things, which I really don't pretend to know. We'll even talk almost mystically about the ganglia. You know that sort of ganglion philosophy?" Mr. Boldero went on parenthetically. "Very interesting it is, sometimes, I think. We could put in a lot about the dark powerful sense-life, sex-life, instinct-life which is controlled by the lumbar ganglion. How important it is that that shouldn't be damaged. That already our modern conditions of civilisation tend unduly to develop the intellect and the thoracic ganglia controlling the higher emotions. That we're wearing out, growing feeble, losing our balance in consequence. And that the only cure—if we are to continue our present mode of civilised life—is to be found in Gumbril's Patent Small

Clothes." Mr. Boldero brought his hand with an emphatic smack on to the table as he spoke, as he fairly shouted, these last words.

"Magnificent," said Gumbril, with genuine admiration.

"This sort of medical and philosophical dope," Mr. Boldero went on, "is always very effective, if it's properly used. The public to whom we are making our appeal is, of course, almost absolutely ignorant on these, or indeed, on almost all other subjects. It is therefore very much impressed by the unfamiliar words; particularly if they have such a good juicy sound as the word 'ganglia'."

"There was a young man of East Anglia, whose loins were a tangle of ganglia," murmured Gumbril, *improvisatore*.

"Precisely," said Mr. Boldero. "Precisely. You see how juicy it is? Well, as I say, they're impressed. And they're also grateful. They're grateful to us for having given them a piece of abstruse, unlikely information which they can pass on to their wives, or to such friends as they know don't read the paper in which our advertisement appears—can pass on airily, don't you know, with easy erudition, as though they'd known all about ganglia from their childhood. And they'll feel such a flow of superiority as they hand on the metaphysics and the pathology, that they'll always think of us with affection They'll buy our breeks and they'll get other people to buy. That's why," Mr. Boldero went off again on an instructive tangent, "that's why the day of secret patent medicines is really over. It's no good saying you have rediscovered some secret known only, in the past, to the Egyptians. People don't know anything about Egyptology; but they have an inkling that such a science exists. And that if it does exist, it's unlikely that patent medicine makers should have found out facts unknown to the professors at the universities. And it's much the same even with secrets that don't come from Egypt. People know there's such a thing as medical science and they again feel it's improbable that manufacturers should know things ignored by the doctors. The modern democratic advertiser is entirely above board. He tells you all about it. He explains that the digestive juices acting on bismuth give rise to a disinfectant acid. He points out that lactic ferment gets destroyed before it reaches the large intestine, so that Metchnikoff's cure generally won't work. And he goes on to explain that the only way of getting the ferment there is to mix it with starch and paraffine: starch to feed the ferment on, paraffine to prevent the starch being digested before it gets to the intestine. And in consequence he convinces you that a mixture of starch, paraffine and ferment is the only thing that's any good at all Consequently you buy it; which you would never have done without the explanation. In the same way, Mr. Gumbril, we mustn't ask people to take our trousers on trust. We must explain scientifically why these trousers will be

good for their health. And by means of the ganglia, as I've pointed out, we can even show that the trousers will be good for their souls and the whole human race at large And as you probably know, Mr. Gumbril, there's nothing like a spiritual message to make things go Combine spirituality with practicality and you've fairly got them. Got them, I may say, on toast. And that's what we can do with our trousers, we can put a message into them, a big, spiritual message. Decidedly," he concluded, "we shall have to work those ganglia all we can."

"I'll undertake to do that," said Gumbril who felt very buoyant and self-assured. Mr. Boldero's hydrogenous conversation had blown him up like a balloon

"And I'm sure you'll do it well," said Mr. Boldero encouragingly. "There is no better training for modern commerce than a literary education. As a practical business man, I always uphold the ancient universities, especially in their teaching of the Humanities."

Gumbril was much flattered. At the moment, it seemed supremely satisfying to be told that he was likely to make a good business man. The business man took on a radiance, began to glow, as it were, with a phosphorescent splendour.

"Then it's very important," continued Mr. Boldero, "to play on their snobbism, to exploit that painful sense of inferiority which the ignorant and ingenuous always feel in the presence of the knowing We've got to make our trousers the Thing—socially right as well as merely personally comfortable. We've got to imply somehow that it's bad form not to wear them. We've got to make those who don't wear them feel rather uncomfortable. Like that film of Charlie Chaplin's, where he's the absent-minded young man about town who dresses for dinner immaculately, from the waist up—white waistcoat, tail coat, stiff shirt, top hat—and only discovers, when he gets down into the hall of the hotel, that he's forgotten to put on his trousers. We've got to make them feel like that. That's always very successful. You know those excellent American advertisements about young ladies whose engagements are broken off because they perspire too freely or have an unpleasant breath? How horribly uncomfortable those make you feel! We've got to do something of the same sort for our trousers Or more immediately applicable would be those tailor's advertisements about correct clothes. 'Good clothes make you feel good' You know the sort of line. And then those grave warning sentences in which you're told that a correctly cut suit may make the difference between an appointment gained and an appointment lost, an interview granted and an interview refused. But the most masterly examples I can think of," Mr. Boldero went on with growing enthusiasm, "are those American advertisements of spectacles, in which the

manufacturers first assume the existence of a social law about goggles and then proceed to invoke all the sanctions which fall on the head of the committer of a solecism upon those who break it. It's masterly. For sport or relaxation, they tell you as tho' it was a social axiom you must wear spectacles of pure tortoiseshell. For business, tortoiseshell rims and nickel earpieces lend incisive poise—incisive poise, we must remember that for our ads, Mr. Gumbril. 'Gumbril's Patent Small Clothes lend incisive poise to business men.' For semi-evening dress shell rims with gold ear pieces and gold nosebridge. And for full dress, gold mounted rimless pince-nez are refinement itself and absolutely correct. Thus we see, a social law has been created, according to which every self-respecting myope or astigmat must have four distinct pairs of glasses. Think if he should wear the all-shell sports model with full dress! Revolting solecism! The people who read advertisements like that begin to feel uncomfortable; they have only one pair of glasses, they are afraid of being laughed at, thought low-class and ignorant and suburban. And since there are few who would not rather be taken in adultery than in provincialism, they rush out to buy four new pairs of spectacles. And the manufacturer gets rich, Mr. Gumbril. Now, we must do something of the kind with our trousers. Imply somehow that they're correct, that you're undressed without, that your fiancée would break off the engagement if she saw you sitting down to dinner on anything but air." Mr. Boldero shrugged his shoulders, vaguely waved his hand.

"It may be rather difficult," said Gumbril, shaking his head.

"It may," Mr. Boldero agreed. "But difficulties are made to be overcome. We must pull the string of snobbery and shame: it's essential. We must find out methods for bringing the weight of public opinion to bear mockingly on those who do not wear our trousers. It is difficult at the moment to see how it can be done. But it will have to be done, it will have to be done," Mr. Boldero repeated emphatically. "We might even find a way of invoking patriotism to our aid. English trousers filled with English air, for English men. A little far-fetched, perhaps. But there might be something in it."

Gumbril shook his head doubtfully.

"Well, it's one of the things we've got to think about in any case," said Mr. Boldero. "We can't afford to neglect such powerful social emotions as these. Sex, as we've seen, is almost entirely out of the question. We must run the rest, therefore, as hard as we can. For instance, there's the novelty business. People feel superior if they possess something new which their neighbours haven't got. The mere fact of newness is an intoxication. We must encourage that sense of superiority, brew up that intoxication. The most absurd and futile objects can be sold because they're new. Not long

ago I sold four million patent soap-dishes of a new and peculiar kind. The point was that you didn't screw the fixture into the bath-room wall, you made a hole in the wall and built the soap-dish into a niche, like a holy water stoup. My soap-dishes possessed no advantages over other kinds of soap-dishes, and they cost a fantastic amount to instal. But I managed to put them across, simply because they were new. Four million of them." Mr. Boldero smiled with satisfaction at the recollection. "We shall do the same, I hope, with our trousers. People may be shy of being the first to appear in them; but the shyness will be compensated for by the sense of superiority and elation produced by the consciousness of the newness of the things."

"Quite so," said Gumbril.

"And then, of course, there's the economy slogan. One pair of Gumbril's Patent Small Clothes will outlast six pairs of ordinary trousers. That's easy enough. So easy that it's really uninteresting." Mr. Boldero waved it away.

"We shall have to have pictures," said Gumbril, parenthetically. He had an idea.

"Oh, of course."

"I believe I know of the very man to do them," Gumbril went on. "His name's Lypiatt. A painter. You've probably heard of him."

"Heard of him!" exclaimed Mr. Boldero. He laughed. "But who hasn't heard of Lydgate."

"Lypiatt."

"Lypgate, I mean, of course."

"I think he'd be the very man," said Gumbril.

"I'm certain he would," said Mr. Boldero, not a whit behind-hand.

Gumbril was pleased with himself. He felt he had done some one a good turn. Poor old Lypiatt; be glad of the money. Gumbril remembered also his own fiver. And remembering his own fiver, he also remembered that Mr. Boldero had as yet made no concrete suggestion about terms He nerved himself at last to suggest to Mr. Boldero that it was time to think of this little matter. Ah, how he hated talking about money! He found it so hard to be firm in asserting his rights. He was ashamed of showing himself grasping. He always thought with consideration of the other person's point of view—poor devil, could he afford to pay? And he was always swindled and always conscious of the fact. Lord, how he hated life on these occasions! Mr. Boldero was still evasive.

"I'll write you a letter about it," he said at last.

Gumbril was delighted. "Yes, do," he said enthusiastically, "do." He knew how to cope with letters all right. He was a devil with the fountain pen. It was these personal, hand-to-hand combats that he couldn't manage. He could have been, he always felt, such a ruthless critic and satirist, such a

violent, unscrupulous polemical writer. And if ever he committed his autobiography to paper, how breathtakingly intimate, how naked—naked without so much as a healthy sunburn to colour the whiteness—how quiveringly sensitive a jelly it would be! All the things he had never told any one would be in it. Confessions at long range—if anything, it would be rather agreeable.

"Yes, do write me a letter," he repeated. "Do."

Mr. Boldero's letter came at last, and the proposals it contained were derisory. A hundred pounds down and five pounds a week when the business should be started. Five pounds a week—and for that he was to act as a managing director, writer of advertisements and promoter of foreign sales. Gumbril felt thankful that Mr. Boldero had put the terms in a letter. If they had been offered point-blank across the luncheon table, he would probably have accepted them without a murmur. He wrote a few neat, sharp phrases saying that he could not consider less than five hundred pounds down and a thousand a year. Mr. Boldero's reply was amiable; would Mr. Gumbril come and see him?

See him? Well, of course, it was inevitable. He would have to see him again some time. But he would send the Complete Man to deal with the fellow. A Complete Man matched with a leprechaun—there could be no doubt as to the issue.

"DEAR MR. BOLDERO," he wrote back, "I should have come to talk over matters before this. But I have been engaged during the last days in growing a beard and until this has come to maturity, I cannot, as you will easily be able to understand, leave the house. By the day after to-morrow, however, I hope to be completely presentable and shall come to see you at your office at about three o'clock, if that is convenient to you. I hope we shall be able to arrange matters satisfactorily. Believe me, dear Mr. Boldero, yours very truly, THEODORE GUMBRIL, JR."

The day after to-morrow became in due course to-day; splendidly bearded and Rabelaisianly broad in his whip-cord toga, Gumbril presented himself at Mr. Boldero's office in Queen Victoria Street.

"I should hardly have recognised you," exclaimed Mr. Boldero as he shook hands. "How it does alter you to be sure!"

"Does it?" The Complete Man laughed with a significant joviality

"Won't you take off your coat?"

"No thanks," said Gumbril. "I'll keep it on."

"Well," said the leprechaun, leaning back in his chair and twinkling, bird-like, across the table.

"Well," repeated Gumbril on a different tone from behind the stooks of his corn-like beard. He smiled, feeling serenely strong and safe.

"I'm sorry we should have disagreed," said Mr. Boldero.

"So am I," the Complete Man replied. "But we shan't disagree for long," he added with significance, and as he spoke the words he brought down his fist with such a bang that the ink-spots on Mr. Boldero's very solid mahogany writing-table trembled and the pens danced, while Mr. Boldero himself started with a genuine alarm He had not expected this. And now he came to look at him more closely, this young Gumbril was a great hulking dangerous-looking fellow. He had thought he would be easy to manage. How could he have made such a mistake?

Gumbril left the office with Mr. Boldero's cheque for three hundred and fifty pounds in his pocket and an annual income of eight hundred His bruised right hand was extremely tender to the touch. He was thankful that a single blow had been enough.

RING LARDNER: JAZZ ELEGIST OF AN ERA



THE GREAT *American Success Story never reached such dizzy and frenzied heights as it did in the 1920's and was never so hollow. The financial freebooters of the nineteenth century despoiled a continent but left an empire; they helped build the structure they looted. The symbolic figures of the age were the steel and oil barons, the coal and copper kings. The symbolic figure of the new age was the Napoleon of finance. Its great men were the bankers, not the railroad builders; its greed, no longer quasi-creative, became smoothly parasitic. Business, so economic orthodoxy declared, was exploitation, the greatest rake-off for the smallest outlay its first commandment. In one of Lardner's own pregnant phrases, men went to business, but "didn't never go to work."*

The American public—doctors, civil servants, stenographers, college professors, farmers, bootblacks, all alike—gladly jumped on the speculative bandwagon with their financial betters, aflame with the glamour of getting something for nothing. Wall Street became the national numbers game, with the great bull market dedicated to the proposition that skyrockets and elevators went up but never came down. Life was an endless merry-

go-round ride with unlimited brass rings for everybody. Society was ascending to a gold-plated paradise ballooned in gilt-edged bonds Dominated by the low ideals of the market place, its aims became as hollow as the insecurities it gambled in.

Such is the background of the world Ring Lardner saw, and it is hard to deny that he caught its most characteristic and possibly its dominant note. His New York is a more feverish version of Lewis's Zenith, a lowbrow counterpart of Aldous Huxley's fashionable London, less deceptively rouged and perfumed but no less corrupt than Norman Douglas's Nepenthe. Lardner's America is the America of the Big Money It had, of course, its spokesmen for other sets of values. opposition as varied as the voices of Irving Babbitt, James Harvey Robinson, Max Eastman, and Art Young, The Nation, The Dial, *and* The New Republic. *But even of dissent the dominant tone was that of Mencken and Nathan and* The American Mercury, *in many ways hardly more than a smart-aleck mirror-antithesis of the very things it derided. Linked in the mystic union of the speakeasy, sophisticate and stockbroker joined to sneer at an impractical idealism unhappy in their beauty-rest heaven.*

This American society of Lardner's is gangrened with vulgar materialism. Everyone, from his bushleaguers and Tinpan Alley musicians to his Westchester "highpolloi," is out for the same rewards the big contract, the notice in the newspapers, the chromium-plated car, pushing one's way up another rung on the pecuniary ladder. Swearing obscenities beneath his breath, Conrad Green, the theatrical producer, will yet ooze subserviency to the socially prominent Mrs. Bryant-Walker, the members of the Pleasant View Golf Club, except the best players, who are watched too closely, will cheat to win a quarter bet or a few balls. The selling-out price varies, but hardly more than a dozen in Lardner's entire gallery will not sacrifice personal integrity for some soul-destroying gain.

There are no distinctions of refinement or taste in Lardner's society. The bridge-playing middle class of suburban Linden, in "Contract," garble the English language and vulgarly criticize their guests; and its aristocracy behave in the same way. There are none except superficial differences between the Masons from Los Angeles, in "Reunion," who don't play golf or drink cocktails, and their in laws, the North Shore Johnstons, who don't like Abie's Irish Rose and read Michael Arlen the sophistication is simply a glaze poured over a complacency and crassness common to both.

For nobody in Lardner's world, no matter how many times he's hit,

ever thinks he is wrong or sees a flaw in himself. Lou Gregg, of Modern Pictures, Inc., preens himself on his importance and fails to note that his wife is drinking herself into insensibility in the luxurious prison he has devised for her. The nurse in "Zone of Quiet," who makes a hospital room a torture chamber, will never learn not to try filching her best friends' boy friends. The beautiful Edith Dole, in "There Are Smiles," believes she is too bewitching to have an automobile accident. "In her special case," as Maxwell Geismar puts it, "beauty will triumph over brakes." Conceit renders them all impervious to experience. And consequently Lardner's characters never understand anybody else. They are too absorbed in loving themselves for other people to be anything but mirrors for their own egos. "These Lardnerian lovers come. They see themselves. And they are conquered."

These are the reasons for the sterility and emptiness, as Lardner saw it, of a society with no ideals except acquisition and no loyalties except a barren image of self. And they are the reasons Lardner depicted that society with a burning ferocity to which his victims were obtusely but predictably blind. The very people Lardner laved in fuming acid took him to their bosoms and made him the comic laureate of their decade; the more his hatred lashed itself into a frenzy, the more they shrieked with laughter. But for Lardner the process became one of increasing embitterment, until finally he was a sort of jazz-age Juvenal, a Swift exacerbated among corn-belt and metropolitan Yahoos. He had hit the jackpot and got into big time, and then discovered that the whole show was a false alarm. For all its galvanic jerking, it was meaningless, it was hollow; there was nothing there. In Lardner's own surrealist metaphor, "he was always trying to tune in on Glens Falls, N. Y.," only to find out at last that "there was no broadcasting station at that place."

ROUND UP

*** The stories in *Round Up* were published between 1924 and 1929. That given here is number 33 in the collection, entitled "Reunion" ***

Affectionate Family Reunion on Long Island

THIS IS ONE about a brother and sister and the sister's husband and the brother's wife. The sister's name was Rita Mason Johnston; she was married to Stuart Johnston, whose intimates called him Stu, which was appropriate only on special occasions. The brother was Bob Mason, originally and recently from Buchanan, Michigan, and in between whiles a respected resident of Los Angeles. His wife was a woman he had found in San Bernardino and married for some reason.

Rita had been named after a Philadelphia aunt with money. The flattered aunt had made Rita's mother bring Rita east for a visit when the child was three or four. After that, until she met Stu, she had spent two-thirds of her time with her aunt or at schools of her aunt's choosing. Her brother Bob, in bad health at fourteen, had gone to California to live with cousins or something. He had visited home only three times in nearly twenty years, and not once while Rita was there. So he and Rita hardly knew each other, you might say.

Johnston and Rita had become acquainted at a party following a Cornell-Pennsylvania football game. Johnston's people were decent and well-off, and Rita's aunt had encouraged the romance, which resulted in a wedding and a comfortable home at Sands Point, Long Island.

Bob Mason had first worked for a cousin in a Los Angeles real estate office, then had gone into business for himself, and finally saved enough to bring his wife to the old Michigan homestead, which had been left him by his father.

He and Jennie were perfectly satisfied with small-town life. Once in a while they visited Chicago, less than a hundred miles away, or drove up the lake shore or down into Indiana in Bob's two-thousand-dollar automobile. In the past year they had been to Chicago three times and had attended three performances of Abie's Irish Rose. It was the best play ever played, better, even, than Lightnin'.

"I honestly think we ought to do something about Rita," said Jennie to Bob one June day. "Imagine a person not seeing their own sister in nearly twenty years!"

"I'd love to see her," replied Bob, "and I wish you'd write her a letter She don't pay no attention to mine. I've asked her time and time again to come out here and stay as long as she likes, but she hasn't even answered."

"Well," said Jennie, "I'll write to her, although she still owes me a letter from last Christmas."

"Stu," said Rita to her husband, "we've simply got to do something about Bob and his wife. Heaven knows how many times he's asked us to go out there and visit and now here is a letter from Jennie, inviting us again."

"Well, why don't you go? You'd enjoy it, seeing the old home and the people you used to play around with. I'd go along, but I haven't the time."

"Time! You have time to go to the Water Gap or up to Manchester for golf every two or three weeks. As for me wanting to see the old home, you know that's silly!"

"Well, we won't argue about it, but I'm certainly not going to waste my vacation in any hick town where they've probably got a six-hole course that you have to putt on with a niblick! Why can't they come here?"

"I don't suppose they could, but if you want me to, I'll ask them."

"Suit yourself. It's your brother."

The Bob Masons boarded The Wolverine at the near-by metropolis of Niles and got off some twenty hours later in New York's Grand Central Station. Compared with the jump from California to Michigan, it seemed like once around on a roller coaster.

Rita met them and identified Bob by the initials on his suitcase. He wouldn't have known her. She was the same age as Jennie, thirty-five, and he had expected her to look it. Instead, she looked ten years younger and was prettier than a member of the Buchanan Mason family had any right to be. And what clothes! Like those of the movie gals who had infested his Los Angeles.

"Why, sis, are you sure it's you?"

"Am I changed?" she said, laughing.

"Not as much as you ought to be," replied Bob. "That's what makes it so hard to recognize you."

"Well, *you've* changed," said Rita. "Let's see—it's twenty years, isn't it? You were fourteen and naturally you didn't have that mustache. But even if you were clean shaven, you wouldn't be a bit like the Bob I remember. And this is Jennie," she added. "Well!"

"Yes," admitted Bob's wife.

She smiled and Rita noticed her teeth for the first time. Most of the visible ones were of gold, and the work had evidently been done by a dentist for whom three members of a foursome were waiting. Rita, Bob, and Bob's wife, escorted by a red cap, walked through the Biltmore and across Forty-third Street to where Gates was parked with Rita's sedan. Gates observed the new-

comers as he relieved the red cap of their meager baggage. "Sears, Roebuck," he said to himself, for he had lived in Janesville, Wisconsin.

"Oh, we forgot to see about your trunks!" exclaimed Rita when the car had started.

"We didn't bring no trunks," said Bob.

"We can only stay two weeks," said his wife.

"That seems like an awfully short visit," Rita said.

"I know, but Bob don't feel like he can stay away from the garden this time of year. We left old Jimmy Preston to take care of it, but nobody can be trusted to tend to another person's garden like you would yourself."

"Does the place look just the same?"

"I should say not! It was in terrible condition when he first came East."

"Came East?"

"I mean, to Michigan. But Bob spent—— How much did you spend fixing things up, Bob, about?"

"Over two thousand dollars," said Bob.

"I thought it was nearer twenty-one or twenty-two hundred," said his wife.

"Well, somewhere over two thousand."

"It was more than two thousand," insisted his wife.

"Look out!" yelled Bob, and the two women jumped.

They were on the Fifty-ninth Street bridge and Gates was worming his way through the myriad trucks and funerals that prevail on that structure at 11 A.M.

"What's the matter? You scared me to death!" said Rita.

"I thought we was going to hit that Reo," Bob explained.

"Bob's a nervous wreck when anybody else is driving," apologized Jennie. "I often think a person who drives themselves is more liable to be nervous when somebody else is driving."

"I guess that's true," agreed Rita, and reflected that she had heard this theory expounded before.

"And I do believe," continued Jennie, "that Bob is just about the best driver in the world, and that's not because he's my husband, either."

This remark caused Gates to turn around suddenly and look the speaker in the eye, and the sedan missed another Reo by a flea's upper lip.

The road leading from New York to the towns on Long Island's north shore is, for the most part, as scenically attractive as an incinerating plant. Nevertheless, Jennie kept saying "How beautiful!" and asking Rita who were the owners of various places which looked as if they had been disowned these many years. Bob was too nervous to make any effort to talk and Rita sighed with relief when the drive was over.

"I'll show you your room," she said, "and then you can rest till lunch. Stu

is in the city and won't be home till dinner. But he only goes in once or twice a week, and he said he would arrange not to go at all while you're here, so he'd have plenty of time to visit."

Jennie was impressed with the luxurious guest room and its outlook on the Sound, but Bob had slept badly on the train and dozed off while she was still marveling.

"I don't suppose you feel like doing much this afternoon," said Rita when lunch was over. "Maybe we'd better just loaf. I imagine that tomorrow and the rest of the week will be pretty strenuous. Stu has all kinds of plans."

So they loafed, and Jennie and Rita took naps, and Bob walked around the yard and plotted the changes he would make in it if it were his.

Seven o'clock brought Stu, who was introduced to the in-laws and then ordered to his room to make himself presentable for dinner. Rita followed him upstairs.

"Well?" he said.

"I'm not sure yet," said Rita, "but I'm kind of afraid— Bob is awfully quiet and I guess she's embarrassed to death. I hope they've brought some other clothes, but then I don't know— A change might be for the worse, though it doesn't seem possible."

"Does she think," asked Stu, "that just because she's from the Golden State she has to run around with a mouthful of nuggets?"

"She's all right when she doesn't smile. You mustn't say anything that will make her smile."

"That's going to be tough," said Stu. "You know what I am when I get started!"

"And another thing I just thought of," said Rita. "He didn't bring any golf clubs."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. I can fit him out."

The host and hostess joined their guests on the porch. A Swedish girl served cocktails.

"Are these—is it liquor?" asked Jennie.

"Just Bacardi, and they're awfully mild," said Rita.

"But Bob and I don't indulge at all," said Jennie.

"This wouldn't be indulging," urged Stu. "This is practically a soft drink."

"I know, but it would be violating the letter of the law," said Jennie.

So Rita and Stu drank alone and the four moved in to dinner.

"What time do you get up, Bob?" asked the host, at table.

"Six o'clock, in the summer," replied his brother-in-law.

"Oh, well, there's no need of that! But it would be nice if we could get through breakfast tomorrow at, say, nine o'clock. I'm going to take you to Piping Rock. We'll make a day of it."

"That'll be fine," said Bob.

"What do you go around in?" inquired his brother-in-law.

"I've got a 1924 Studebaker," said Bob.

"No, no," said Stu. "I mean your golf game."

"Me? I haven't any golf game. I never played golf in my life."

Stu's expression would have made Rita laugh if she hadn't felt so sorry for him.

"Bob can't see anything in golf," explained Jennie. "He says it's a sissy game. I tell him he ought to try it some time and he might change his mind. Why don't you try it while you're here, Bob? Maybe Stuart would show you the fine points."

The host seemed not to have heard this suggestion.

"They have got a links near Buchanan, between Buchanan and Niles," said Bob, "but they charge fifty dollars to join and thirty-five dollars annual dues. That seems exorbitant."

"It's an outrage!" is what Stu was going to say, but Rita shook her head at him "I think you'd find it was worth the money," is what he said.

"Lots of our friends play," said Jennie. "Some of the nicest people in both Niles and Buchanan belong to the club, so it can't be as silly as Bob thinks. But he gets an idear in his head and you can't change him."

"What's on tonight?" asked Stu as the dessert was served.

"Well," said Rita, "I thought these people would want to get to bed early after their trip, so we won't go anywhere. We might have a little bridge. Do you feel like bridge, Jennie?"

"I'm awfully sorry, but neither Bob or I play. I know it must be a wonderful game and some of our best friends play it a great deal, but somehow or other, Bob and I just never took it up "

This was a terrible blow to Rita, who counted that day lost which was without its twenty or thirty rubbers.

"You miss something," she said with remarkable self-control. "Shall we have our coffee on the porch? I think it's pleasanter."

"What do you smoke, Bob? Cigars or cigarettes?" inquired the host.

"Neither, thanks," Bob replied. "I never cared for tobacco."

"You're lucky," said Stu. "A cigarette, Jennie?"

"Mercy! It would kill me! Even the smell of smoke makes me dizzy."

Stu and Rita evidently missed this statement for they proceeded to light their cigarettes.

"Is bridge hard to learn?" asked Jennie presently.

"Not very," said Rita.

"I was wondering if maybe you and Stuart couldn't teach it to Bob and I. Then we could have some games while we're here."

"Well," said Rita, "it's—it's a terribly hard game to learn, that is, to play it right."

"You said it wasn't," put in Bob.

"Well, it isn't, if you don't care—if you just—— But to learn to play it right, it's impossible!"

"Have you got a radio?" asked Bob. He pronounced the "a" short, as in Buchanan.

"I'm sorry to say we haven't," said Stu, who wasn't sorry at all.

"I don't know how you get along without one," said Bob.

"We just live for ours!" said Jennie.

"What is it, an Atwater-Kent?" asked Rita.

She had seen that name in some paper yesterday.

"No," replied Bob. "It's a Ware Neutrodyne, with a Type X receiver."

"And an Ethovox horn," added Jennie. "We had Omaha one night."

"You did!" said Rita.

There was a silence, which was broken by Bob's asking his sister how often she went to New York.

"Only when I can't help myself, when I simply have to get something."

"Don't you never go to the theater?"

"Oh, yes, if it's something especially good."

"Of course," said Jennie, "you've seen Abie's Irish Rose?"

"Heavens, no!" said Rita. "Everybody says it's terrible!"

"Well, it's not terrible!" said Bob indignantly. "That is, if you've got anywheres near as good a company here as they have in Chicago."

"I'd like to see the New York company," said Jennie, "and see how they do compare."

This met with no encouragement and another silence followed.

"Well, Bob," said Stu at length, "you must do *something* for exercise. How about a little tennis in the morning?"

"That's another game I don't play," Bob replied. "As for exercise, I get plenty of it fooling around the garden and monkeying with the car."

"Then all I can suggest is that we put in the day fishing or swimming or just riding around in the launch."

Bob was silent, but his wife spoke up.

"You know, Stuart, Bob's ashamed to admit it, but being on the water makes him deathly sick, even if it's as smooth as glass. And he can't swim."

Bob didn't seem to relish this topic and turned to his sister.

"Do you remember the Allens in Buchanan, old Tom Allen and his family?"

"Kind of."

"Did you hear about Louise Allen running away and getting married?"

"No."

"Well, she ran away with Doc Marshall and got married. And at first old Tom was pretty near wild, but when Doc and Louise came back, why one day Doc was walking along the street and old Tom came along from the opposite direction and Doc spoke to him and called him by name and old Tom looked at him and asked him what he wanted, and Doc said he wanted to know if he'd forgave him. So old Tom said, 'Forgiven you' Have *you* forgiven *me*, is the question.' So Doc said, forgiven him for what, and old Tom said, for not killing her when she was a baby. This put the laugh on Doc and the boys have all been kidding him about it. I guess you didn't know Doc."

"No, I didn't," admitted Rita.

"Quite a card," said Bob.

Jennie had picked up a book. "May Fair," she read. "Is it good?"

"Yes," said Rita. "It's short stories by Michael Arlen, you know, the man who wrote The Green Hat."

"A detective story?" asked Bob.

"No, Michael Arlen. He was here last spring and we met him. He's awfully nice. He's really an Armenian."

"There's an Armenian comes to Buchanan two or three times a year," said Jennie. "But he sells linen "

Upstairs, two or three hours later, Stu made a brief speech:

"My God! He doesn't play golf, he doesn't play tennis, he doesn't play bridge, he doesn't swim, fish, drink, or smoke. And I'd arranged these two weeks for a kind of a vacation! Hell's bells!"

In the guest room Bob said:

"I certainly miss the old radio."

"Yes," said Jennie. "We'd be getting the Drake Hotel now."

"I'd like to see the New York company in Abie's Irish Rose," said Jennie at breakfast next morning. "I'd like to compare them with the companies that's in Chicago."

"Did you see it in Chicago?" asked Stu.

"Three times," said Jennie.

"You must be sick of it," said Stu.

"I couldn't get sick of it," replied Jennie, "not if I saw it every night in the year."

After breakfast Bob tried to read the *Herald-Tribune*, the *World*, and the *Times*, but couldn't make head or tail of them. He wished he had a copy of the Chi *Trib*, even if it was two or three days old.

"Do you go to pictures much?" inquired Jennie of her hostess.

"Hardly ever," said Rita

"We're very fond of them," said Jennie. "You know, we lived in Los Angeles for a long time, and that's right near Hollywood. So we often saw different stars in person. And some friends of ours knew Harold Lloyd and introduced us to him. You'd never know him without those glasses He's really handsome! And democratic!"

"What is he running for?" asked Stu.

"Nothing that I know of," said Jennie. "Is he running for anything, Bob?"

"I don't think so," said Bob.

The morning dragged along and finally it was time for lunch and Stu broke a precedent by having seven highballs with his meal.

"They'll make you sleepy," warned Rita.

"What of it?" he said, and there seemed to be no answer.

Sure enough, Stu slept on the porch swing all afternoon while Jennie struggled with the first volume of The Peasants and Rita took Bob for a walk.

"Do you remember Tom Allen?" Bob asked her.

"I don't believe so," she answered.

"Oh, you must remember the Allens! They lived next door to the Deans. Well, anyway, Tom had a daughter, Louise, about our age, and she ran away with Doc Marshall and got married. Everybody thought old Tom would shoot Doc on sight, but when they met and Doc asked Tom to forgive him, old Tom said he was the one that ought to be asking forgiveness. So Doc said forgiveness for what, and old Tom said, for not killing Louise when she was a baby."

Near the end of their walk, Bob asked:

"Don't you never go to New York?"

"Hardly ever, and especially at this time of year. It's so hot! But I suppose you and Jennie would like to see something of it. We'll arrange to drive in before you go home."

Stu woke up a little after five and took on a fresh cargo of Scotch before dinner.

"You certainly ought to get a radio!" said Bob as the clock struck nine.

At half past, everybody went to bed.

"This will be our third day here," said Bob, dressing. "We don't start home till a week from next Thursday."

"Yes," said Jennie absently.

"I'd wear my other suit today, but it's all wrinkled up," said Bob.

"I'll ask Rita for an iron and press it out for you. Or maybe we could send it to a tailor."

"Tailor! There's no tailor within miles of here, or anything else as far as I can see!"

Stu wasn't up for breakfast, but joined the party on the porch a little before lunch time. He had started in on a new bottle.

"Bob," he said, "you ought to fall off the wagon. I've got some of the most able-bodied Scotch on Long Island."

"Thanks," said his brother-in-law. "I may be tempted before long."

It was late in the afternoon when Bob said to Rita:

"Do you remember old Tom Allen?"

"I think so," his sister replied. "Didn't his daughter run away with some doctor?"

"Yes," said Bob, "and——"

He was interrupted by Stu's voice, calling Rita from upstairs.

"Listen," said Stu when she had answered his summons, "a telegram is coming for me tonight, saying that my grandfather is sick up in Bennington, Vermont, or some place, and for me to come at once. And he's going to stay sick for at least ten days, so sick that I can't leave him."

"No, sir!" said Rita firmly. "You don't do that to me!"

"Well, then, how about this? Suppose it's one of our dearest friends that's sick and we've both got to go. Do you think they'd go home? You see, we could pack up some baggage and run in to New York and stay over night if necessary, and come back here after they're gone."

"If they ever found out, I couldn't forgive myself."

"They won't. You let me plan it and we'll spring it after dinner. I wouldn't be so desperate if I hadn't just got so I could break an eighty-five and if I don't keep after it I'll be back in the nineties."

But after dinner, while Rita and Stu were sparring for an opening, Jennie said:

"Folks, I hope you won't think we are crazy, but Bob is, almost. He's worried to death about his garden. He read in the paper this morning that there's a regular drought threatened all through southern Michigan. We were afraid of it, because it hadn't rained for a long time before we left. And now it looks like everything would be ruined unless he gets back there and tends to things himself. We left old Jimmy Preston to look out for things, but you can't trust things to an outsider. Bob feels like if he was there, he could see that things were taken care of. The garden will get plenty of water if Bob is there to see to it, but if he isn't, there's no telling what will happen. So if you'll forgive us, we're thinking about starting home on The Wolverine tomorrow afternoon."

"Well!" said Rita.

"Well!" said Stu.

"Of course," said Rita, "you know best, and it would be a shame to have your whole garden spoiled. But it does seem— But of course we wouldn't dream of urging—"

"We've simply got to go, sis," said Bob. "And another thing: Don't bother about coming in to New York with us. Just send us in your car tomorrow forenoon, say, and we'll have time to look around a little before we catch the train."

The Masons were in their room at the Biltmore.

"It's eight dollars a day without meals," said Bob, "but we can eat out, some place where it's not expensive, and besides, it's only for a week. Tonight," he went on, "Abie's Irish Rose. Tomorrow morning the top of the Woolworth Building. Tomorrow afternoon, Coney. Thursday night, Abie again. After that, we'll see."

Jennie laughed nervously.

"I'll be petrified every time we leave the hotel," she said. "Suppose we should meet them on the street!"

"There's no danger of that," said Bob. "Sis never comes to town in summer and Stuart is taking a vacation. What I'm afraid of is that they'll run acrost some article on the weather conditions in the Middle West and see where we've had the rainiest summer since 1902."

SATIRE IN MODERN POETRY



VERSE IS *no longer the predominant weapon of satire that it was in the eighteenth century. Poetic imagination, indeed, in our day pours itself much more torrentially into the novel than it does into verse; the accent of modern poetry is more one of reflective thought than it is of singing. Its characteristic melody is that of the speaking voice, not the mighty harmonies of Milton nor the music of Herrick or Keats. Our most serious poets are caught up in the seriousness of their own minds, it is our fiction writers who have dared the great outbursts of lyric song. Where among contemporary poets can we find anything like Joyce's great chants in* Ulysses *and* Finnegans Wake, *or the unabashed lyricism of Steinbeck in* The Grapes of Wrath, *or such dithyrambs as Wolfe's antiphonal "Proud, cruel, everchanging and ephemeral city" and "The river is a tide of moving waters" in* Of Time and the River *and the tremendous invocation "For what is man?" in* You Can't Go Home Again? *The music of our poets is, by comparison, not absent, but subdued and reticent. Writers like Eliot, MacLeish, Spender,* say *rather than* sing.

And since the nineteenth century, satire likewise has flooded into prose rather than into verse. Pope could send a swarm of couplets singing and stinging like angry bees; it would be impossible to name a single eminent contemporary poet whose fame has been gained primarily as a satirist, and hard to name any long satiric poem of distinguished merit. W. H.

Auden's imitations of Byron have more of Byron's diffuseness and slipshodness than they have of the concentrated bite Byron learned from the great Augustans. Roy Campbell and Leonard Bacon have both written long satiric poems that were amusing but trivial. The only long satiric poem I can recall in recent times that has been largely successful is Lee Wilson Dodd's The Great Enlightenment. *Conducted with a jazzed-up version of the heroic couplet, its witty attacks on the confusions of modern physics, psychology, and economic theory have the hilarious effect of Alexander Pope rendered on a slide trombone.*

But the poets have been no less sensitive than the other writers to the forces that in our time have been emphasizing the critical and satiric. Just as satire has become part of the orchestration of novelists not predominantly satiric, like Lawrence, Hemingway, and Dos Passos, so satire has diffused itself into the work of the poets. It glints here and there through the verse of Yeats, Housman, Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, Horace Gregory, William Carlos Williams; it is a sharp and frequent overtone in Cummings, Eliot, Day Lewis, and MacNeice; it rises to dominance in the poetry of Kenneth Fearing. The special tone, for example, of Eliot's Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock *and his* Waste Land *has come from the satiric dissonances mingled with the chords of tired frustration, disillusion, and despair. Seldom, however, except in the lighter poets, like A. P. Herbert, F. P. A., Dorothy Parker, and Ogden Nash, has the satiric impulse exerted a consistent pressure. From the more serious poets it has elicited only an occasional purely satiric poem, more in the nature of isolated sniping than unswerving campaign*

This section, therefore, consists of no more than a few samples of modern verse in which satire has concentrated itself into relative purity. Rather than present any fragments of only partly successful long poems, I have confined the choices to short poems that can be given complete. Their contents range from grave to gay. There are three representative of the older and more traditional poetic techniques, three of more recent experimental manners, and three light-verse poets.

Edwin Arlington Robinson is a poet who speaks rather than sings. His padlocked reticence, indeed, is somewhat deceptive; there is a pawky-Puckish wit and an oblique gleam of the bohemian within the Puritan rind. Robinson's devices are incongruity of epithet and inadequacy of statement, combining with a certain deliberate ambiguity. "Miniver

Cheevy" (the very title a beautifully incongruous combination) reminds us of Veblen in its use of planned incongruity: "the medieval grace of iron clothing," the jambed-together images of the "warrior bold" and Miniver "dancing," the conscious folksiness of "Priam's neighbors." "Ripe renown" and "fragrant" are masterly in the incommunicativeness which leaves us unsure how far these two terms are euphuisms for a more violent assault on the nostrils. The calculated flatness of

Miniver thought, and thought, and thought
And thought about it,

manages, by the device of saying nothing, to imply how weakly Miniver does nothing. The entire poem is a superbly ironic commentary on the romantic-daydream mode of escape from reality; and it gains depth from the fact that there was enough in Robinson that was like Miniver to give his burlesque the dignity of self-satire.

Robinson achieves his effects through a restrained editorial criticism, Thomas Hardy through a mere presentation of the irony in certain juxtapositions. His Satires of Circumstance *are a series of dramatic little episodes in which the facts are allowed to speak for themselves: the lover returning for a forgotten stick and hearing, through the open window, his sweetheart acrimoniously berating her mother; the consumptive husband who, unobserved in the back of the shop, has watched his wife ordering mourning apparel. Hardy's vignettes do not permit themselves even Robinson's sparse comment. They make their bleak and ironic impact by pure objectivity.*

Hardy's restraint is here dictated by his theme; he does not everywhere forbid himself eloquence. But Robinson's was the Puritan temperament making an artistic virtue out of its asceticism, his very concessions to expressiveness being, as it were, grudging, and thereby achieving a clipped and laconic intensity. Robert Frost is a New Englander, like Robinson, but he displays another facet of the New England character: he is in some sort a crackerbox poet, garrulous, whimsical, colloquial. If Robinson has the underlying granite of his region, Frost has the quirks it so oddly fuses with a dry sanity. The sound of New England speech echoes in his verse; through his own utterance you can hear the voices of his characters sounding. In "Departmental" the gossiping ant voices are at the same time those of a group of transformed and transplanted New Hampshire bu-

colics. Frost's use of the ant to symbolize the bureaucratization in modern society that he is satirizing, and its queer semihuman, semi-inhuman effect, is as sly and comic as anything in La Fontaine.

T. S. Eliot in the twenties was the leader of those poets who were combining the influences of the French symbolists and seventeenth-century metaphysical poets like Donne. Learned quotation, literary allusion, insinuation, an elegant grotesqueness, exquisite neatness of structure, a recondite wit, are his methods. "The Hippopotamus" is characteristic, with its uprooted and distorted echoes from religious literature ("based upon a rock," "God works in a mysterious way," "Blood of the Lamb," "washed as white as snow"), its invocation of fantastic pictures like the flying hippopotamus rising from the damp savannahs, and the urbane disrespectfulness of blending the "True Church" and the jungle beast. There is stinging wit, too, driving home the accusations of venality and Laodiceanism.

Cummings' wit is slighter than Eliot's, and is achieved in "Two XI" largely by ingenious manipulation of clichés. The sequence of banalities that he sardonically weaves into his text is underlined by the repeated "et ceteras" evoking an unspecified background of still further and more stupefying banalities, and implying the poet's disillusioned comment on them all. The virtuosity with which Cummings makes that single tag, "et cetera," convey half a dozen different images, from those of cheap political oratory to a witty indecency, is one of the triumphs of the poem. Its eccentricities of form and style show the imprint of the Greenwich Village bohemianism of its decade.

Kenneth Fearing, as Eda Lou Walton points out, writes "a kind of jazzed satire" of "the modern world of capitalist and dull middle-class minds." He uses slang and echoed clichés from the radio and movies and popular press even more often than Cummings does, and with a far angrier and fiercer sociological intent Fearing's bitterness grows out of the demand for social justice. His wit is a caustic revelation of how machine civilization crushes personality like a steel die stamping out identical parts, and reduces lives to gray monotony and defeat even as a harlot chorus of subsidized propaganda sings that liberty and opportunity beckon to all.

Little need be said about the light-verse writers. Dorothy Parker is the most violent and angry of these. Her wit grows out of the barbs and wisecracks of sophistication; it is in essence an emanation of the very world upon which it is turned, like the hell hounds in Milton feeding

upon the womb of Sin in which they were conceived A. P. Herbert *has a kindlier wit, and one richer in human nature, depicting in verse of brilliant metrical ingenuity the jealousies, antagonisms, and unconscious hypocrisies of a delectable range of English females from the lower middle class to the pseudo genteel.*

Ogden Nash's most spectacular device is the fantastic and farfetched rhyme we have noted in the author of Hudibras. *But, like Butler, Nash is also a keen observer of social attitudes and psychological weaknesses, and his rhymes reinforce his wit. There are acerbity and insight in "The Terrible People" and "I Never Even Suggested It," and a deadly summing-up in "The Japanese." Many a more pretentious satirist has said less than this writer of flippant doggerel lamenting that Duty should always seem*

fifty per cent martyr
And fifty-one per cent Tartar.

NINE VERSE SATIRISTS

««« Robinson's "Miniver Cheevy" was originally published in *The Town Down the River* in 1910. The two Thomas Hardy poems, "In Church" and "At the Draper's," are from *Satires of Circumstance*, 1914. Robert Frost's poem, "Departmental," is from *A Further Range*, 1936. Eliot's "The Hippopotamus" is from his *Collected Poems* of 1920, Cummings' "Two XI" from *Is 5*, 1926, the three poems by Dorothy Parker are from *Enough Rope*, 1927 The two poems by A. P. Herbert are from *Plain Jane*, 1927; Kenneth Fearing's "Dirge" is from his *Poems* of 1935; the four poems by Ogden Nash are from *The Face Is Familiar*, and were originally published between 1930 and 1940 »»»

I. THOMAS HARDY

IN CHURCH

"AND NOW to God the Father," he ends,
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles:
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.
Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door,
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile
And re-enact at the vestry-glass
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show
That had moved the congregation so.

AT THE DRAPER'S

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said,
"O, I didn't see you come in there—
Why couldn't you speak?" — "Well, I didn't. I left
That you should not notice I'd been there.

"You were viewing some lovely things. *'Soon required
For a widow, of latest fashion'*;
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man
Who had to be cold and ashen

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you
'In the latest new note in mourning,'
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning."

II. EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
  Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
  Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
  And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
  Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
  But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
  And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
  Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
  And kept on drinking.

III. ROBERT FROST

DEPARTMENTAL

An ant on the table cloth
  Ran into a dormant moth
Of many times his size.
He showed not the least surprise.
His business wasn't with such.
He gave it scarcely a touch,
And was off on his duty run.
Yet if he encountered one
Of the hive's enquiry squad
Whose work is to find out God
And the nature of time and space,
He would put him onto the case.
Ants are a curious race;

Robert Frost

One crossing with hurried tread
The body of one of their dead
Isn't given a moment's arrest—
Seems not even impressed.
But he no doubt reports to any
With whom he crosses antennae,
And they no doubt report
To the higher up at court.
Then word goes forth in Formic:
"Death's come to Jerry McCormic,
Our selfless forager Jerry.
Will the special Janizary
Whose office it is to bury
The dead of the commissary
Go bring him home to his people.
Lay him in state on a sepal.
Wrap him for shroud in a petal.
Embalm him with ichor of nettle.
This is the word of your Queen."
And presently on the scene
Appears a solemn mortician;
And taking formal position
With feelers calmly atwiddle,
Seizes the dead by the middle,
And heaving him high in the air,
Carries him out of there.
No one stands round to stare.
It is nobody else's affair.

It couldn't be called ungentle.
But how thoroughly departmental.

IV. T. S. ELIOT

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

Similiter et omnes revereantur Diaconos, ut mandatum Jesu Christi, et Episcopum, ut Jesum Christum, existentum filium Patris: Presbyteros autem, ut concilium Dei et conjunctionem Apostolorum. Sine his Ecclesia non vocatur; de quibis suadeo vos sic habeo.

S. Ignatii ad Trallianos.

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.

The broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud,
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from oversea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflections hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
  Is passed in sleep, at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
  The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
  Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
  The praise of God in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
  And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints shall he be seen
  Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
  By all the martyred virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
  Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

V. E. E. CUMMINGS

TWO XI

MY SWEET old etcetera
aunt lucy during the recent

war could and what
is more did tell you just
what everybody was fighting
for,
my sister

isabel created hundreds
(and
hundreds) of socks not to
mention shirts fleaproof earwarmers

etcetera wristers etcetera, my
mother hoped that

i would die etcetera
bravely of course my father used

to become hoarse talking about how it was
a privilege and if only he
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly
in the deep mud et
cetera
(dreaming,
et

   cetera, of
Your smile
eyes knees and of your Etcetera)

VI. KENNETH FEARING

DIRGE

1-2-3 was the number he played but today the number came 3-2-
   bought his carbide at 30 but it went to 29; had the
      favorite at Bowie but the track was slow—

O, executive type, would you like to drive a floating-power,
   knee-action, silk-upholstered six? Wed a Hollywood star?
      Shoot the course in 58? Draw to the ace, king, jack?
O, fellow with a will who won't take no, watch out for three
   cigarettes on the same single match; O, democratic voter
      born in August unders Mars, beware of liquidated rails—

Dénouement to dénouement, he took a personal pride in the certain,
   certain way he lived his own private life,
 but nevertheless, they shut off his gas; nevertheless, the bank
   foreclosed; nevertheless, the landlord called; nevertheless,
   the radio broke,

And twelve o'clock arrived just once too often,
just the same he wore one grey tweed suit, bought one straw hat,
drank one straight Scotch, walked one short step, took one
long look, drew one deep breath,
just one too many,

And wow he died as wow he lived,
going whop to the office and blooie home to sleep and biff
got married and bam had children and oof got fired,
zowie did he live and zowie did he die,

With who the hell are you at the corner of his casket, and where
the hell we going on the right-hand silver knob, and who the
hell cares walking second from the end with an American Beauty
wreath from why the hell not,
Very much missed by the circulation staff of the *New York Evening
Post;* deeply, deeply mourned by the B. M. T.,

Wham, Mr. Roosevelt; pow, Sears Roebuck; awk, big dipper; bop,
summer rain;
bong, Mr., bong, Mr., bong, Mr., bong.

VII. A. P. HERBERT

COALS OF FIRE

WELL, Mrs. Rogers,
I hear you're taking lodgers—
And young enough, they say, to be your son
Now Rogers is away, dear,
You're moping, I daresay, dear,
And company is pleasant if it's only just the one.

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.
And as to what the gentleman is paying,
Don't think it's any interest for me,
Still, I thought you'd like to know what some was saying,
So I thought I'd tell you what was said, you see."

"Thank you, Mrs. Bubble,
But spare yourself the trouble;
I'm sure it's very good of you to call,
And you not very well, dear,
It's difficult to tell, dear,
But are you quite the same since you had that nasty fall?

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.
But Alice said that you'd been hearing double
Since Bubble threw that hammer at your head;
Of course, I know she's very thick with Bubble,
But still, I thought I'd tell you what was said."

"Thank you, Mrs. Rogers,
But, speaking of the lodgers,
Do you mean to have another, dear, or not?
That's what I should do, dear.
He'll be lonely just with you, dear;
Though I'm sure it's very cosy with those nice new blinds you've got.

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.
I'm sorry for the boy, and him in mourning,
Though Mabel don't believe the wife is dead;
That Mabel says too much, I give you warning,
But still, I thought I'd tell you what she said."

"Thank you, Mrs. Bubble,
Now how about your trouble?
Is Bubble backing losers just the same?
You've lost a lot of hair, dear;
You ought to take more care, dear;
But there, he's dragged you down, dear—I don't say you're to blame.

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.

You'll have a cup of tea? I've got it handy.
I daresay it's a long time since your last.
Well, Mabel said you breakfasted on brandy,
And I'd better tell you what remarks is passed."

I CAN'T THINK WHAT HE SEES IN HER

Jealousy's *an awful thing and foreign to my nature;*
I'd punish it by law if I was in the Legislature.
One can't have all of anything, and wanting it is mean,
But still, there is a limit, and I speak of Miss Duveen.

I'm not a jealous woman,
But I can't see what he sees in her,
I can't see what *he sees in her,*
I can't see what he sees in her!
If she was something striking
I could understand the liking,
And I wouldn't have a word to say to that;
But I can't see why he's fond
Of that objectionable blonde—
That fluffy little, stuffy little, flashy little, trashy little,
creepy-crawly, music-hally, horrid little CAT!

I wouldn't say a word against the girl—be sure of that;
It's not the creature's fault she has the manners of a rat.
Her dresses may be dowdy, but her hair is always new,
And if she squints a little bit—well, many people do.

I'm not a jealous woman,
But I can't *see what he sees in her,*
I can't see what *he sees in her,*
I can't see what he sees *in her!*
He's absolutely free—
There's no bitterness in me,
Though an ordinary woman would explode;
I'd only like to know
What he sees in such a crow
As that insinuating, calculating, irritating, titivating, sleepy
little, creepy little, sticky little TOAD!

VIII. DOROTHY PARKER

UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE

By the time you swear you're his,
Shivering and sighing,
And he vows his passion is
Infinite, undying—
Lady, make a note of this:
One of you is lying.

RÉSUMÉ

Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.

INDIAN SUMMER

In youth, it was a way I had
To do my best to please,
And change, with every passing lad,
To suit his theories.

But now I know the things I know,
And do the things I do;
And if you do not like me so,
To hell, my love, with you!

IX. OGDEN NASH

THE TERRIBLE PEOPLE

PEOPLE who have what they want are very fond of telling people who haven't what they want that they don't really want it,
And I wish I could afford to gather all such people into a gloomy castle on the Danube and hire half a dozen capable Draculas to haunt it.
I don't mind their having a lot of money, and I don't care how they employ it,
But I think they damn well ought to admit they enjoy it.
But no, they insist on being stealthy
About the pleasures of being wealthy,
And the possession of a handsome annuity
Makes them think that to say how hard it is to make both ends meet is their bounden duty.
You cannot conceive of an occasion
Which will find them without some suitable evasion.
Yes indeed, with arguments they are very fecund,
Their first point is that money isn't everything, and that they have no money anyhow is their second.
Some people's money is merited,
And other people's is inherited,
But wherever it comes from,
They talk about it as if it were something you got pink gums from.
This may well be,
But if so, why do they not relieve themselves of the burden by transferring *it to the deserving poor or to me?*
Perhaps indeed the possession of wealth is constantly distressing,
But I should be quite willing to assume every curse of wealth if I could at the same time assume every blessing.
The only uncurable troubles of the rich are the troubles that money can't cure,
Which is a kind of trouble that is even more troublesome if you are poor.
Certainly there are lots of things in life that money won't buy, but it's very funny—
Have you ever tried to buy them without money?

Ogden Nash

I NEVER EVEN SUGGESTED IT

I know lots of men who are in love and lots of men who are married and lots of men who are both,
And to fall out with their loved ones is what all of them are most loth.
They are conciliatory at every opportunity,
Because all they want is serenity and a certain amount of impunity.
Yes, many the swain who has finally admitted that the earth is flat
Simply to sidestep a spat,
Many the masculine Positively or Absolutely which has been diluted to an If
Simply to avert a tiff,
Many the two-fisted executive whose domestic conversation is limited to a tactfully interpolated Yes,
And then he is amazed to find that he is being raked backwards over a bed of coals nevertheless.
These misguided fellows are under the impression that it takes two to make a quarrel, that you can sidestep a crisis by nonaggression and nonresistance,
Instead of removing yourself to a discreet distance.
Passivity can be a provoking *modus operandi;*
Consider the Empire and Gandhi.
Silence is golden, but sometimes invisibility is golder.
Because loved ones may not be able to make bricks without straw but often they don't need any straw to manufacture a bone to pick or blood in their eye or a chip for their soft white shoulder.
It is my duty, gentlemen, to inform you that women are dictators all, and I recommend to you this moral:
In real life it takes only one to make a quarrel.

KIND OF AN ODE TO DUTY

O Duty,
Why hast thou not the visage of a sweetie or a cutie?
Why glitter thy spectacles so ominously?
Why art thou clad so abominously?
Why art thou so different from Venus?
And why do thou and I have so few interests mutually in common between us?

Why art thou fifty per cent martyr
And fifty-one per cent Tartar?
Why is it thy unfortunate wont
To try to attract people by calling on them either to leave undone the deeds they like, or to do the deeds they don't?
Why art thou so like an April post-mortem
Or something that died in the ortumn?
Above all, why dost thou continue to hound me?
Why art thou always albatrossly hanging around me?
Thou so ubiquitous,
And I so iniquitous.
I seem to be the one person in the world thou art perpetually preaching at who or to who,
Whatever looks like fun, there art thou standing between me and it, calling yoo-hoo.
O Duty, Duty!
How noble a man should I be hadst thou the visage of a sweetie or a cutie!
But as it is thou art so much forbiddinger than a Wodehouse hero's forbiddingest aunt
That in the words of the poet, When Duty whispers low, Thou must, this erstwhile youth replies, I just can't.

THE JAPANESE

How courteous is the Japanese;
He always says, "Excuse it, please."
He climbs into his neighbor's garden,
And smiles, and says, "I beg your pardon";
He bows, and grins a friendly grin,
And calls his hungry family in;
He grins, and bows a friendly bow;
"So sorry, this my garden now."

A. P. HERBERT IN CON- TEMPT OF COURT



A. P. HERBERT *pops up again, this time in an ingenious prose squib. Herbert is one of our most versatile lighter satirists. From the sparkling verse of* She Shanties, Plain Jane, *and* Laughing Ann *a clever archeologist of the future might almost reconstruct the social life of London in the twenties· cinema palaces, charwomen, political arguments, pubs, betting on the races, modernist art, fancy ladies, stenographers, strong silent men, feminine fripperies, Soho restaurants, servant girls, bobbies, motor bikes, suburbanites, clubroom stories, and hosts of other trivial but revealing aspects of a contemporary metropolis. No one, not even Max Beerbohm, has written a wittier parody of Shakespeare than Herbert's* Two Gentlemen of Soho, *with the pile of corpses it manages to heap up on the night-club floor before the end, Plum's superb and prolonged and ludicrous suicide-soliloquy, and its engaging thesis that if Shakespeare is best played in modern dress, modern themes would go better in Shakespearean dress.*

Herbert has also written novels, among them Holy Deadlock, *a serious dissection of the archaic brutalities of British divorce law. This angry attack on one subdivision of a complicated system of jurisprudence had*

been anticipated by an entire facetious series of Misleading Cases in the Common Law *which happy readers of* Punch *found in its pages for a number of years. They belong to that sober school of spoofing, so different from the epigram or the wisecrack, in which hardly any individual thing said would sound funny taken alone, but in which each sedately offered statement becomes increasingly hilarious in the light of an all-embracing comic idea. It is not comic in itself to discuss whether words reproduced by a phonograph should be regarded as written or spoken Herbert poses this problem as one of libel or slander, in the case of a man who records a choice array of violent defamations and sends them as a Christmas present to his victim, who plays the record to his assembled family and friends It is not comic in itself to say that "in the heart of the commercial capital of the world" a man should be able to "convey a negotiable instrument down the street without being arrested": what if the document be a check stenciled on the flank of a large and malevolent white cow?*

These burlesques are wonderful in the way they adapt the solemn terminology of the law, its citations of precedent, and its tags of legal Latin, to absurd situations in which the laughter trembles just beneath the surface of the grave demeanor. If, for example, the words "bibulous bishop" as a crossword-puzzle clue can be filled out only with the name of an actual living prelate, who, if anyone, the puzzle-maker or its solver, commits the libel? Is it a crime for a mystery story writer to get publicity by pretending to murder his wife? "Factum clarum, jus nebulosum," says Mr. Herbert, "the clearer the facts the more muddled the law." Nor are his misleading cases limited to deriding purely legal tangles. He devises equally enchanting ones devoted to the intimidation of pedestrians by motorists, the unreasonable vagaries of the income tax in dealing with the expenses and earnings of authors (something every writer resents), and the impossibility of finding any significant distinction between stockbrokers and common gamblers.

The constant theme of Misleading Cases, *in fact, is the wide gulf between law and justice, between common custom and right reason. These legal fantasies are constantly proving that courts of law and the world in general are not only illogical, but, what is more, unreasonable. (The very concept of the Reasonable Man, so favored by jurists, is itself unreasonable in its insistence on a combination of skepticism, fairness, caution, and good will little likely to be found in the average man.) Mr. H[illegible] farcical logic brings these facts of human behavior before the bar [illegible] in a way as wise as it is merry.*

MISLEADING CASES IN THE COMMON LAW

*** The first volume of *Misleading Cases* was published in 1927, *More Misleading Cases* in 1930. "Marrowfat v. Marrowfat" is from the earlier volume ***

Marrowfat v. Marrowfat: Is Marriage Lawful?

THE PRESIDENT of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division gave judgment in this action today. He said:

"In this case issues of such importance have been raised that I hope the Press, ignoring a recent Act of Parliament, will report the proceedings, and particularly my remarks, in full.

"The petitioner, Mr. Andrew Marrowfat, is asking for a restitution of conjugal rights, his wife Gladys having deserted, or rather left, him (for it is a subtle distinction of English law that, while a husband who departs abruptly 'deserts' his wife, a wife in similar circumstances 'leaves' him). The facts are clear, but Sir Humphrey Codd, for the respondent, has advanced and indefatigably argued a novel point of law. A cynical writer has somewhere remarked that human marriage is in the nature of a lottery, and Sir Humphrey now suggests that this observation has some significance in law. The transactions governed by the Gaming and Lotteries Acts are of various kinds. They may be wholly unlawful such as lotteries, dicing, or snakes-and-ladders (played for money); or they may not be illegal (such as wagers on horse-races arranged with credit bookmakers over His Majesty's telephones), but so little loved by the law that the law will not assist the parties to adjust any difficulty or disagreement which may arise.

"This department of the law is a labyrinth of which Parliament and the Courts may well be proud, and in the days when it was still my duty to know and study the law it gave me as much trouble as the law of libel and slander. It is now, however, the duty of counsel to look up and inform me of the condition of the law. And Sir Humphrey tells me that the common characteristic of every class of gaming transaction is this—that a person makes a sacrifice in the hope of receiving a benefit, but the reception of this benefit depends upon the operation of chance and not upon the exercise of his own skill and judgment. Sir Humphrey says that this was exactly the character of the contract of marriage entered into by the petitioner, and

that the Court should no more assist him to enforce that contract than it will assist a person who bets on horse-races to recover his losses, or even his winnings.

"Now, in what circumstances was the contract made? The evidence is that in 1925 the petitioner was traveling as passenger in an ocean-going steamship between Australia and Colombo, that he met the respondent (then Gladys Willows) for the first time on the evening of the First-Class Fancy Dress Ball, when he drew her (by lot, it appears) as his partner for dinner. The respondent was dressed as a Columbine and the petitioner as an Oriental prince. After dinner they danced, and after dancing they proceeded on to the upper or boat deck to seek some relief from the tropical heat of the evening. On the boat deck the unexpected spectacle of the Southern Cross and other constellations excited in the petitioner a warm affection for the respondent, and he was moved to such protestations and, it appears, caresses as are commonly the preliminaries of a matrimonial entanglement. And in fact an offer of marriage was made and accepted, a few days later, in a four-wheeled cab at Colombo.

"Now Sir Humphrey says that the petitioner throughout was governed by chance and not by judgment or selective skill. Chance embarked the two parties in the same steamship, chance threw them together at the fancy dress dinner, and chance directed that at that meeting the respondent should be dressed in the fascinating costume of a Columbine, which she never wore before or after. It is common ground that she is not a good wife; but never, says Sir Humphrey, between that first meeting and the making of the contract did the petitioner have an opportunity to estimate by reason and discretion whether she was likely to be a good wife or not, for those attributes which are most in evidence and most agreeable on ocean-going steamships are not the same as the attributes of a good wife in the home. The petitioner therefore sacrificed or staked his liberty and his fortune without knowing and without the means of knowing what return, if any, he would receive. He selected his wife as many citizens select a racehorse, with no stronger reason for believing it to be the fastest runner than that it has an attractive name or elegant tail. Such is Sir Humphrey's argument, and in my judgment it is well-founded. I am satisfied that this contract was in the nature of a gaming or gambling transaction, and therefore the petitioner is not entitled to the assistance of this Court, and his suit is dismissed.

"So much for this case. But in the public interest I am bound to ask myself whether this decision has not a wider ambit than the particular affairs of Mr. and Mrs. Marrowfat. Can it be said that any matrimonial arrangement is different, in essence, from theirs? I spoke just now of racehorses, which are a common subject of wagers. But if one may accept the evidence of

numerous newspaper placards and headlines, there are men who are able with almost infallible accuracy to predict the future behavior of racehorses in given circumstances. Indeed, so confident and successful are many of these prophets that the element of chance seems to be wholly removed and it becomes matter for argument whether the transactions of those who act upon their information ought properly to be classed as wagers or as lawful investments depending upon skill, and I hope that at some future date I may be called upon to determine some delicate dispute of that character.

"But can the same be said of him who selects from the very numerous women in these islands some particular female to be the partner of his life? The prophet of the race-course has in nearly every case definite material on which to found his predictions: such-and-such a foal has run faster than such-and-such a filly over such-and-such a distance, in wet weather or in dry weather, with a cough, with glanders, with enthusiasm, and so forth; and therefore it may be expected to do this, that, or the other thing in the same or some other circumstances. But the case of the prospective husband is *ex hypothesi* completely opposite. He is backing a horse which has never run before, or, if his fancy be a widow, has never run over the same course in the same company. The form of a race-horse is public property, but the form of a bride is of necessity concealed. (*Laughter.*) Have I been indelicate?"

Sir Humphrey: "No, my lord."

The President: "Lord Mildew said in *Simpson* v. *Archdeacon Dunn* (1873), 2 Q. B., at p. 514: 'The critical period in matrimony is breakfast-time.' But for too many couples the first breakfast which they take together is the wedding-breakfast. And how many husbands ascertain before marriage the opinions of the beloved on reading in bed, on early rising or late retiring? It was argued in the case just decided that a man of average judgment should be able to make satisfactory deductions from general conduct, but how is a man to deduce from the conduct of an unmarried woman at lunchtime the behavior of the same woman, married, at the morning meal? It is a commonplace of literature that no one can predict the conduct of a woman. Women complain, in moments of dissatisfaction, that all men are alike, but men complain, with equal indignation, that no two women are the same, and that no woman is the same for many days or even minutes together. It follows that no experience, however extensive, is a certain guide, and no man's judgment, however profound, is in this department valuable. In all matrimonial transactions, therefore, the element of skill is negligible and the el[illegible] of chance predominates. This brings all marriages into the [illegible] (see *Wagg* v. *The Chief Constable of Ely*[illegible] I h[illegible] Court cannot according to law assist

or relieve the victims of these arrangements, whether by way of restitution, separation, or divorce. Therefore it will be idle for married parties to bring their grievances before us, and, in short, this Court will never sit again.

"It is not without a pang that I thus pronounce the death-sentence of Divorce, which has meant so much to so many in this Court. To those learned counsel who have made a good thing out of it I offer my sincere condolences, and particularly to Sir Humphrey Codd, who by his own argument has destroyed his own livelihood. We shall all have to do the best we can with the limited and tedious litigation which arises from Probate and Admiralty, but all persons who want a divorce will be compelled in future to divorce themselves."

The Court adjourned, for good.

ILF AND PETROV: PICARESQUE REALISM IN RUSSIA



EVERYONE *is familiar with the conventional image of the Russian soul, brooding with lugubrious mysticism over a bottle of vodka and the problem of the universe. No doubt these melancholy yearners do exist in Russia, but it would be as great an error to look for a mob of them milling around Moscow's Red Square as to expect the harbor of Nantucket to be full of Captain Ahabs. But whereas Russian sadness has roamed the world, Russian humor has remained at home. One of the distinctions of Ilya Ilf and Eugene Petrov's* Little Golden Calf, *therefore, to many American readers, will be that it explodes this mythical picture of the somber-minded Russian into a thousand hilarious smithereens. No more effervescent a satire has appeared in the present century, none more full of high-spirited comic invention.* Little Golden Calf *is funny in every way, from its fabulous picaresque plot down through its fantastic characters and preposterous episodes to the humor of individual sentences and groups of words.*

Even before the story itself begins, there is a long cast of characters, ending with "Inmates and Keepers of an Insane Asylum, Members of

the Communist Party and of the League of Communist Youth," "Motorists, Pedestrians, Orators, Auditors," "Tractors, Camels, etc., etc." Next comes a defense of the pedestrian against motorists, with reminders that Horace, Boyle, Lobachevsky, and Gutenberg were all pedestrians, emphasis on the fact that pedestrians were the creators and spreaders of culture, and the clinching argument that even the automobile was invented by pedestrians. This tour de force introduces us to two of the thirty supposititious sons of Lieutenant Schmidt, the revolutionary hero, a species of proletarian mendicant like "the spurious grandchildren of Karl Marx, the non-existent nephews of Friedrich Engels, the brothers of Lunacharsky, the cousins of Clara Zetkin, and, if the worst comes to the worst, the descendants of the famous anarchist Prince Kropotkin," and the story begins to cavort. After that the fun never falters.

The main action is a blackmail plot directed against an underground millionaire disguised as an insignificant clerk while he waits for the return of capitalism. He will cough up a million rubles or the blackmailers will tell the authorities of the existence and the illegal sources of his wealth Building a documentary case against the toad-faced Koreiko, subjecting him to a psychological softening-up process by harrying him with mysterious beggars who mutter "Gimme million, gimme million, gimme million!" and with cryptic telegrams reading "COUNTESS ALTERED APPEARANCE RUNNING BACKWARD" and "LOAD ORANGES BARRELS BROTHERS KARAMAZOV," pursuing him across half Russia on the Turkestan Railroad when he flees his persecutors—all this constitutes a structure as wildly farcical as a Keystone Comedy.

The leader of the conspirators, Ostap Bender, always called "the great schemer," is a Dionysian invention. Inexhaustible in resource, fantastically ingenious in tricks and dodges, he is a sort of Soviet Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford crossed with Figaro. His conversation is a rush of intellectual agility, insolence, and burlesque rejoicing in its own cap-and-bells; his brain processes race circles around his slower-witted associates whom he bullies with teasing tenderness. He is an artist-charlatan who scorns achieving his ends by the most direct route; he enjoys the game for its own sake; he must do everything in the most strange, tortuous, elaborate, and astounding way conceivable.

And yet, combined with his love of involution, there is a keen appreciation of reality. "What is the homespun truth?" he loves to ask, and his insight into people, when it is not dazzled by his own romanticism, is

profound. Hear him explain the purpose of his telegram campaign against Koreiko· "Most important of all is to create confusion in the camp of the enemy. He must lose all peace of mind This is not difficult to achieve. In the final analysis, it is the incomprehensible that people fear most. . . . The more mystery the better. I am convinced that my last telegram, 'twins in thought,' produced a disastrous impression on our colleague. All this is super-phosphate—fertilizer. Let him worry a bit. The defendant must be educated to the idea that he must surrender his money. He must be morally disarmed. His reactionary instinct for private property must be suppressed."

Bender is the supreme comic achievement of the book, but the great schemer and his deeds by no means exhaust its comedy. There is the chauffeur Adam Kozlevich and his decrepit taxi enticingly labeled "Hey, let's ride!" There are the employees of the organization HERCULES who have long since lost sight of their original trading operations in lumber as they struggle to retain possession of the hotel which is their headquarters, so that when their head finds on his desk nowadays a "paper relative to export cedars" he is too astonished to understand what it is doing there. There is the bookkeeper Berlaga, who flees to the insane asylum when he fears the imminence of a "housecleaning" in HERCULES. There is old Funt, the perpetual Substitute-Chairman, who has been doing time for various absconding executives from the time of Alexander the Liberator right through the Soviet regime. There is the director, Polykhayev, who from signing his name with a rubber stamp has gone on to devising more and more stamps, until now he has thirty-six, with inscriptions ranging from "Splendid thought. Polykhayev" and "Make a public example of" to "Throw to the periphery" and "Don't bother me."

The climax of Little Golden Calf *is no letdown in hilarity. Bender finally backs Koreiko into a corner and extorts his million. Then he discovers that in Soviet Russia he can make no more use of it than Koreiko can of his remaining nine. If he tries to get accommodations in a hotel he is always finding that the rooms have been entirely taken by Congresses of Soil Experts or of the League of Communist Youth, who have also bought all the seats available at the theaters Only by pretending to be the conductor of a symphonic orchestra can Bender get a small room. When he wants to erect a grandiose house in Moorish style, with minarets, he learns that the Building Office releases supplies only to collectives. "Some cooperative corporation of playwrights," he says indignantly, "could build half a sky-*

scraper for a million, with a flat roof for open-air lectures. But Ostap Bender, descendant of Janissaries, can do nothing with it There you have the hegemony of a class crushing a lonely millionaire!" He tries to escape over the border and is despoiled of all his possessions by the Rumanian frontier guard and chased back across the Dniester. As, bareheaded and with only one boot, he crawls up on the Soviet shore, he says, addressing no one, "No ovations are necessary. I did not become a Count of Monte Cristo. I shall have to qualify as a janitor!"

The local color and the institutions of Little Golden Calf *are those of contemporary Russia, but its human nature is universal Assuredly, better social machinery may ameliorate many evils, and possibly in the course of time a changed social system may even effect transformations in human nature, but twenty years is too brief a space in which to expect its grotesqueries and weaknesses to be very much altered, if they ever are There is a sort of sly knowingness in the pretended naïveté with which the authors of* Little Golden Calf *profess to believe that even the most Utopian aims have been achieved, and then go on showing people behaving with all the usual pettinesses, tricks, dishonesties, and self-deceptions But* Little Golden Calf *is not counterrevolutionary, it is just cheerfully and crazily realistic. Without the slightest touch of bitterness, it is a gorgeous and absurd deflation of ourselves.*

LITTLE GOLDEN CALF

««« *Little Golden Calf* was published in this country in 1932, in an authorized translation by Charles Malamuth. The selection given here includes the last third of Chapter 4 and all of Chapter 5 »»»

Operations of an Underground Millionaire

ALEXANDER IVANOVICH KOREIKO, one of the least important employees of HERCULES, was a man in the last trench of youth. He was thirty-eight years old. On his red sealing wax face squatted wheaten brows over white eyes. His English-style mustache was the color of ripe grain. His face would have seemed altogether young were it not for the coarse corporal's chevrons that crossed his cheeks and neck. On the job Alexander Ivanovich carried himself like an exemplary soldier. He did not reason why, carried out orders, was indefatigable, ever ready to serve, and somewhat stupid.

"He is such a timid one," the chief of the financial accounting department would say of him. "He is a bit too humble, a bit too devoted. As soon as a subscription to a loan is announced, there he is offering a month's salary. He is the first to subscribe. And his whole salary is only forty-six rubles. I would like to know how he manages to exist on such money."

Alexander Ivanovich had a remarkable gift. With lightning speed he could multiply and divide in his mind large three-digit and four-digit figures. But this did not redeem him from the reputation of being a rather dull figure.

"Say, Alexander Ivanovich," a neighbor would ask in the midst of his work, "how much is 836 by 423?"

"353,628," Koreiko would answer, pausing for a fraction of a second.

And the neighbor would not bother to check the result of the multiplication, for he knew that the rather stupid Koreiko never erred.

"Another man in his place would make himself a career," Sakharkov and Dreyfus and Tezoimenitsky, Muzykant and Chevazhevskaya, and Borisokhlebsky and Lapidus Jr., and the old fool Kukushkind, and even the Bookkeeper Berlaga who had run away to the insane asylum, would say. "But he is just an idiot. He'll sit here the rest of his life on his forty-six rubles."

And, of course, all of Alexander Ivanovich's fellow jobholders, and even

the chief of the financial accounting department, Comrade Arnikov, and not only he, but even the chief of the entire HERCULES, Comrade Polykhayev and his personal secretary, Serna Mikhailovna, well, in a word, they would all have been exceedingly surprised if they had found out that Alexander Ivanovich Koreiko, the lowliest of clerks, for some strange reason, less than an hour ago, had dragged from one railroad station to another a suitcase in which lay neither trousers known as "the 100th Anniversary of Odessa," nor a pale chicken, nor a pamphlet entitled "The Problems of the League of Communist Youth in the Village," but ten million rubles in foreign *valuta and Soviet coinage.*

In the year 1915 Sasha Koreiko was a twenty-three-year-old idler among those who in all justice had been dubbed "retired gymnasium students." He had never graduated from the middle school, had no occupation, wandered over the boulevards and lived on his parents. His uncle, who was the executive secretary of the chief of the military district, freed him from military service and therefore he could listen without terror to the cries of the half-mad newsboy: "Latest news! Our army advancing! Thank God! Many killed and wounded! Thank God!"

In those days Sasha Koreiko imagined his future thus: suddenly, while walking along the street, in the gutter of the drainpipe covered with zinc stars, right near the wall, he would find a cherry-colored leather billfold that squeaked like a saddle. In the billfold there would be much money—two thousand five hundred rubles—and after that all would be well. He had imagined so frequently how he would find the money that he knew exactly where it would happen—on Victory of Poltava Street, in the asphalt corner created by a promontory of the house, right in the starry gutter. There his leather benefactor would lie, slightly covered with the dry blooms *of acacia, and next door neighbor* to a flattened cigarette butt. Sasha would go every day to Victory of Poltava Street, but to his extreme surprise he found no billfold there. He would poke the trash with his walking stick and look stupidly at the enameled sign "Tax Inspector U. M. Soloveysky" which hung over the adjoining front entrance. Then Sasha would wander home like a madman, throw himself on the red plush divan and dream of wealth, deafened by the blows of his heart and pulse. His pulses were small, spiteful, restive.

The Revolution of 1917 chased Koreiko off the plush divan. He discovered that he could become the happy heir of rich men with whom he was not acquainted. He sensed that throughout the land there was at this time a great quantity of shelterless gold, precious things, superb furniture, pictures and rugs, furs and dinner services. He simply must take advantage of the opportunity and seize this wealth—the sooner the better.

But in those days he was still young and foolish. He seized a large apartment, the owner of which had wisely departed on a French ship for Constantinople, and began to live in it openly. Throughout an entire week he accustomed himself to the rich life of the merchant who had disappeared, drank the muscat he found in the sideboard, ate with it the finest herring, dragged various bric-à-brac to the market, and was extremely surprised when he was arrested.

Five months later he left prison. He did not abandon the thought of becoming a rich man, but he understood that this enterprise required dissimulation, canniness and secrecy. He had to put on protective coloring, and that came to Alexander Ivanovich in the shape of high ocher boots, deep blue riding breeches, and the long military coat of a commissary worker.

In those unquiet times everything made by the hands of man functioned *worse than formerly: houses did not protect from cold, food did* not fill, electricity was turned on only on the occasion of a mass attack against deserters and bandits, the water system gave water only to the lower floors, while the streetcars did not operate at all. At the same time, the elements became angrier and more dangerous: winters were colder than formerly; the wind was stronger; and colds that formerly would lay a man up in bed for three days now killed him in three days. And young people of uncertain occupation would wander in droves through the streets, recklessly singing a song about money that had lost its value:

"I run into an eating place,
Not a kopek to my face,
Change ten milli-ions for me."

Alexander Ivanovich noticed with anxiety that the moneys that he earned with great cunning turned to nothing.

Typhoid toppled people over by the thousands. Sasha traded in medicaments stolen from the government stores. The typhoid epidemic netted him five hundred million, but in a month the exchange rate converted this to five million. In sugars he made a billion. The rate of exchange turned this money to dust.

During this period one of his most successful enterprises was the stealing of the regular supply train bound for the Volga. Koreiko was the commandant of the train. The train left Poltava for Samara, but never reached Samara and never returned to Poltava. It was lost on the road without a trace. With it disappeared Alexander Ivanovich.

The ocher boots turned up in Moscow toward the end of 1922. With them appeared a short green leather jacket lined with golden fox. The raised sheepskin collar, which at first glance resembled a quilt, protected

the dashing fellow's mug and its Sebastopol whiskers from the frost. On Alexander Ivanovich's head rested a splendid curly Caucasian fur hat.

In those days Moscow was already overrun by new motors with crystal headlights. The newly-rich moved over the streets in sealskin caps and in coats lined with fur in a pretentious lyre design Pointed Gothic boots and brief cases with the straps and handles of suitcases had become fashionable. The non-committal greeting "citizen" began to crowd out "comrade." Some young people who had quickly comprehended in what consisted the joy of life were already dancing in restaurants the one-step "Dixie" and even the fox-trot "Flower of the Sun." In the city rang out the shouts of dashing izvozchiks, and in the large house of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs the tailor Zhurkevich was working night and day on swallow tails for Soviet diplomats about to depart abroad

Alexander Ivanovich noted with surprise that his raiment, which in the provinces was a mark of manliness and wealth, here in Moscow appeared a remnant of antiquity and cast an inconvenient shadow on its possessor.

Two months later a new establishment under the sign "Industrial Artel Revanche" opened on the Stretensky Boulevard. The artel had two rooms at its disposal. In the first hung a portrait of the founder of socialism, Friedrich Engels, under which, smiling innocently, sat Koreiko himself in a gray English suit stitched with red silk thread. The ocher boots and the coarse whiskers had disappeared. The cheeks of Alexander Ivanovich were smoothly shaven. The production end was in the back room. There stood two oaken barrels equipped with manometers and measuring glasses, one on the floor, the other on a shelf. The barrels were connected by a thin rubber tube through which a liquid ran, gurgling importantly. When all of the liquid had passed from the upper container to the lower, a boy in felt boots would appear in the production room Sighing in a manner not customary to children, the boy would remove the liquid from the lower barrel in a bucket, drag it to the shelf and pour it into the upper barrel Finishing this complicated industrial process, the boy would go into the office to get warm, while gurgles would again issue from the tubing—the liquid was going along its customary way from the upper reservoir to the lower.

Alexander Ivanovich himself did not know exactly what type of chemicals were manufactured by the artel "Revanche." He had no time for chemicals His working day was sufficiently full without them. He drove from one bank to another, negotiating resources for expanding production. In trusts he concluded agreements for the supply of chemical products and received raw materials at a standard price. He also received financial aid The resale of the raw materials to state factories at ten times the pur-

chase price took a good deal of his time, and much energy was also consumed by valuta transactions on the Black Exchange at the foot of the monument to the heroes of the battle of Plevna.

At the end of a year the banks and trusts became desirous of learning what beneficial effects the aid in finances and raw materials had had on the development of the "Industrial Artel Revanche," and whether the promising private establishment was in need of further aid. The commission, properly decorated with learned beards, arrived at the "Revanche" in three carriages. The chairman of the commission stared for a long time into the unresponsive face of Engels, and for a long time knocked with his stick on the pine counter, challenging the management and the members of the artel to come forth. Finally the door of the production room opened and before the eyes of the commission appeared a weeping boy, bucket in hand

From conversation with the youthful representative of "Revanche," they learned that production was in full swing but that the master had not appeared for a week. The commission did not spend much time in the production room. The fluid that had gurgled so importantly in the rubber tubing, by taste, color, and chemical contents resembled ordinary water, which it actually proved to be. Having determined this astounding fact, the chairman of the commission said "H'm," and looked at the members, who also said "H'm." Then the chairman glanced at the boy with a perturbed smile and asked

"How old are you?"

"I'm past twelve," the boy answered.

And he began to weep so profusely that the members of the commission, jostling each other, ran out to the street, found their places in the carriages, and drove away in utter embarrassment. As for the artel "Revanche"—all of its operations were entered in the books of the banks and the trusts on the account of Profit and Loss, and particularly in that division of the account which does not mention a word about profits but is entirely dedicated to losses.

The very day that the commission carried on its significant conversation with the boy in the office of "Revanche," Alexander Ivanovich Koreiko issued from a sleeping compartment of an express train in a small grape republic about three thousand kilometers from Moscow.

He opened a window in the hotel room and saw a little town in the midst of an oasis, separated from the burning sands by a row of poplar trees, provided with a bamboo water system and a trashy clay fortress, and full of Asiatic noise.

The very next day he learned that the republic had begun to build an electric power station. He also learned that there was a constant dearth of

money and that the construction on which depended the future of the republic might have to stop.

Then the altruistic private operator decided to help the republic. Again he sank into his ocher boots, put on a Thibetan skull cap, and taking along a swollen portfolio advanced upon the office of the construction works.

He was not greeted with particular courtesy. But he carried himself with due dignity, asked nothing for himself, and emphasized principally the fact that the idea of electrifying backward parts of the country was especially dear to his heart.

"Your construction job," he argued, "lacks money. I'll get it."

And he proposed to organize, in conjunction with the construction of the electric power station, a subsidiary company that would yield a profit.

"What could be simpler? We'll sell postcards with views of the construction, and this will bring us the means of which the construction job is in such great need. Bear in mind that you will give nothing, you will only receive."

Alexander Ivanovich slit the air with his palm decisively. His words were convincing. The project seemed good and advantageous. Armed with an agreement according to which he would receive one-fourth of all profits from the post card enterprise, Koreiko began to work.

First of all, there was the need of operating expenses. These had to be taken from money assigned for the construction of the station. There was no other money in the republic.

"Never mind," he soothed the builders. "Bear in mind, from this moment on you will only receive."

On horseback Alexander Ivanovich inspected the canyon in which already rose the cement parallelepipeds of the future power station, and with one glance estimated the picturesqueness of the porphyry cliffs. After him, in a buggy, photographers rolled into the canyon. They surrounded the construction with jointed, long-legged tripods, hid themselves under black shawls, and for a long time clicked the shutters of their cameras. When everything had been photographed, one of the photographers dropped the shawl to his shoulders and remarked meditatively:

"It would have been better, of course, to have built the station a bit more to the left with the monastery for background. That would be much more picturesque."

It was decided to build a proper establishment as soon as possible to print the pictures. The money, as before, was taken out of the building funds. For that reason certain operations had to stop at the electric power station. But everyone consoled himself with the fact that the profits from the new enterprise would enable them to make up for lost time. The printing

establishment was built in the very same canyon opposite the power station, and soon, not far from the cemented parallelepipeds of the station appeared the parallelepipeds of the printing establishment. Gradually barrels of cement, iron rods, bricks and gravel wandered from one end of the canyon to the other. Later the workmen also wandered over across the canyon, because the wages on the new construction job were better.

A half year later at all the railroad stations appeared distributing agents in striped trousers. They traded in post cards depicting the grandiose construction that was being carried on among the cliffs of the great republic. In summer gardens, theaters, cinemas, on ships and in health resorts innocent young ladies turned the glass drums of charity lotteries. Everyone who played the lottery won something, the prize being a postcard with a view of the electrical canyon.

The predictions of Koreiko came true. Profits flowed in from all sides. But Alexander Ivanovich did not let them out of his hands. A fourth part he took unto himself according to agreement. He appropriated an equal amount on the pretext that he had not yet received a complete accounting from all of his agents, while the remainder he used for developing his charity combine.

"You have to be a good manager," he would say quietly. "First the business must be established properly, and only then will the real profits appear."

By this time the Marion excavator which had been removed from the station was digging a foundation for a new printing building. The work at the electric station stopped. No one appeared on the construction job except photographers and black shawls.

The business developed, and Alexander Koreiko, from whose face never disappeared an honest Soviet smile, began to print postcards with the portraits of cinema actors.

One evening, in accordance with the regulations of the local Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, a commission with full powers drove up in a quaking machine. Alexander Ivanovich lost no time, cast a farewell glance at the crumbling foundation of the electric power station, at the grandiose structure of the subsidiary organization, flooded with lights, and took to his heels.

"H'm," said the chairman of the commission, poking with his stick the cracks in the foundation. "Where is the electric station?"

Then he looked at the members of the commission who, in their turn, said "H'm." There was no electric station.

But in the edifice of the printing establishment the commission found work in full swing. Violet lamps gleamed and flat printing presses con-

scientiously flapped their wings. Three of them painted the canyon one color, while out of the fourth, the multicolored one, like cards out of the sleeves of a magician, flew postcards with the portraits of an alleged Douglas Fairbanks in a black half-mask on the mug of a samovar tippler, of the enchanting Lya de Putti and of a nice chap with bulging eyes, famous under the name of Monte Banks.

For a long time after this memorable evening open-air exemplary trials were held in the canyon. But Alexander Ivanovich had managed to add a half a million rubles to his capital.

His small restive pulse beat as impatiently as ever He felt that right now when the old economic system had perished and while the new was only coming to life, it was possible to amass a great fortune. But he was aware that an open struggle for wealth was unthinkable in the land of the Soviets. And with a smile of superiority he looked at the pathetic remains of the Nepmen rotting under signboards· "Sale of the Merchandise of the B. S Lyebedev Worsted Stuffs Trust," "Brocade and Utensils for Churches and Clubs," or "Grocery Store, X. Robinson and M. Piatnitsa."

Koreiko understood that at this time only an underground trade founded on the strictest secrecy was possible. All the crises that affected the young economy benefited him. All that the government lost brought him profit. He took advantage of every error in merchandising and carried away his hundred thousand. He dealt in grain products, cloth, sugar, textiles, everything And he was alone, all alone with his millions. In various parts of the country various, divers, large and small, smart alecks worked, but they did not know that they were working for him. Koreiko acted only through intermediaries, and he was the only one who knew the channels through which money flowed to him.

Precisely at noon Alexander Ivanovich pushed aside his current account book and began his lunch. He took out of his box a peeled white radish and ate it sedately. Then he swallowed a cold soft-boiled egg There is no more unsavory food than cold soft-boiled eggs and an honest, happy man will never eat them. But Alexander Ivanovich did not eat, he fed himself. He did not lunch, he went through the physiological process of introducing into his organism the necessary proportions of fats, carbohydrates and vitamins.

All of the HERCULES employees topped their lunch with tea. Alexander Ivanovich, however, drank boiled water with a bit of sugar. Tea excites excessive activity of the heart and Koreiko was preciously guarding his health.

The possessor of millions resembled a boxer who is calculatingly preparing his triumph. Alexander Ivanovich wanted to be young and fresh on

the day when the old order would return and he would be able to emerge from underground and fearlessly open his ordinary little suitcase. Koreiko never doubted that the old order would return. He was saving himself for capitalism.

And that no one might guess his secondary and most important life, he led a penurious existence, trying not to live beyond the means of his forty-six rubles a month income which he received for petty and tedious work in the financial accounting department decorated with maenads, naiads and dryads.

THE SANITY OF JAMES THURBER



THURBER is the sanest zany in contemporary satire. Amid the violent antics of innumerable wits epitomizing the madness of modern life Thurber's balance is almost abnormal Groucho Marx's wild zest in satirizing the cockeyed and hysterical tempo of our times has its roots in a sympathetic frenzy, there is a cuckoo glee in Jimmie Durante working himself up to a lather of haste and confusion, Frank Sullivan and Ludwig Bemelmans carry fortuitous dissociation of ideas to the point of derangement Thurber deals with people doing mad things or life crazily breaking down; he himself is almost plaintively sane. His botany instructor may begin screaming because Thurber can't see the structure of plant cells, at military drill the whole company may go off at a wrong angle, at home grandfather may get furious over the failure to bury an imaginary dead body he believes is floating around the house, the bed may fall down in the attic, Thurber may grapple with the weird vocabulary of a colored maid, seals may bark in the bedroom: Thurber surveys all this irrationality and reports it in a tone between bewilderment and reasonable expostulation. Ultimately it seems to him that he is looking at a whole society with its tiles loose

Mere mania, however, Thurber can dismiss as harmless; it is when lunacy becomes aggressive and overbearing that he begins to snap back. This is the source of his antagonism to all the people who want to tell you how to live your life, or to explain to you what it means, or to pep you

up with inspirational vitamins, to thrust their panaceas down your throat, to make you do things their way. And when Thurber gets good and sore, it's the mad dogs who had better look out and be careful whom they bite. No comic satirist writing today has a more lethal touch. By the time his heat has risen from plaintiveness to indignation he can be just about fatal. There is nothing much left except to pick up the pieces after The Male Animal *has done its work on the brainless cult of decadent athleticism in American colleges and on the bullying of intellectual workers by business interests. Freedom of speech has had more ringing and noble defenses; the forces behind censorship have seldom been shown up as so blindly and irrationally stupid.*

Let Your Mind Alone *is directed against all the psychological analyze-yourself literature, from the writers of inspirational slop to the high-toned psychoanalytical racketeers and their exploitation of a pseudo-scientific jargon. The reader might observe how adroitly, in "Sex ex Machina," Thurber puts his finger on the slipshod generalization, the uncritical endeavor to make every sort of phenomenon fit into a standardized hand-me-down intellectual pattern, and the skill with which he subjects the facile use of sex symbolism to clear analysis and crucial illustration. It is not only comic, it is cogent, to use squirrels and rabbits to test the idea that becoming confused in the face of an oncoming automobile indicates sex hunger. And it is relevant to point out that the automobile can hardly serve "as a sex symbol because of the 'mechanical principle involved'" if not one person in six has any idea what mechanical principle is involved. Again and again, in dealing with this kind of psychiatric pretentiousness verging upon charlatanism, Thurber scores a good stinging bull's-eye. No matter how ludicrous his illustrations superficially appear—the fox and the blue heron (Mr. F and Mr. H), the man who yells "Hold it, stupid!" and the combination ironing board and card table flopping and banging around in the attic—fundamentally they are all grounded in clear common sense. Thurber's unpretentious sanity confronting a crazy world is the very essence of his satire.*

LET YOUR MIND ALONE

••• *Let Your Mind Alone* appeared in book form in 1935. "Sex ex Machina" is given complete as it was in the original volume •••

Sex ex Machina

WITH THE disappearance of the gas mantel and the advent of the short circuit, man's tranquillity began to be threatened by everything he put his hand on Many people believe that it was a sad day indeed when Benjamin Franklin tied that key to a kite string and flew the kite in a thunderstorm; other people believe that if it hadn't been Franklin, it would have been someone else. As, of course, it was in the case of the harnessing of steam and the invention of the gas engine. At any rate, it has come about that so-called civilized man finds himself today surrounded by the myriad mechanical devices of a technological world. Writers of books on how to control your nerves, how to conquer fear, how to cultivate calm, how to be happy in spite of everything, are of several minds as regards the relation of man and the machine. Some of them are prone to believe that the mind and body, if properly disciplined, can get the upper hand on this mechanized existence. Others merely ignore the situation and go on to the profitable writing of more facile chapters of inspiration. Still others attribute the whole menace of the machine to sex, and so confuse the average reader that he cannot always be certain whether he has been knocked down by an automobile or is merely in love.

Dr. Bisch, the Be-Glad-You're-Neurotic man, has a remarkable chapter which deals, in part, with man, sex, and the machine. He examines the case of three hypothetical men who start across a street on a red light and get in the way of an oncoming automobile. A dodges successfully; B stands still, "accepting the situation with calm and resignation," thus becoming one of my favorite heroes in modern belles-lettres, and C hesitates, wavers, jumps backward and forward, and finally runs head on into the car. To lead you through Dr. Bisch's complete analysis of what was wrong with B and C would occupy your whole day He mentions what the McDougallians would say ("Instinct!"), what the Freudians would retort ("Complexes!"), and what the behaviorists would shout ("Conditioned reflexes!"). He also brings in what the physiologists would say—deficient thyroid, hypoadrenal functioning, and so on. The average sedentary man of our

time who is at all suggestible must emerge from this chapter believing that his chances of surviving a combination of instinct, complexes, reflexes, glands, sex, and present-day traffic conditions are about equal to those of a one-legged blind man trying to get out of a labyrinth.

Let us single out what Dr. Bisch thinks the Freudians would say about poor Mr. C, who ran right into the car. He writes, "'Sex hunger,' the Freudians would declare. 'Always keyed up and irritable because of it. Undoubtedly suffers from insomnia and when he does sleep his dream life must be productive, distorted, and possibly frightening. Automobile unquestionably has sex significance for him . . . to C the car is both enticing and menacing at one and the same time. . . . A thorough analysis is indicated. . . . It might take months. But then, the man needs an analysis as much as food. He is heading for a complete nervous collapse.'" It is my studied opinion, not to put too fine a point on it, that Mr. C is heading for a good mangling, and that if he gets away with only a nervous collapse, it will be a miracle.

I have not always, I am sorry to say, been able to go the whole way with the Freudians, or even a very considerable distance. Even though, as Dr. Bisch says, "One must admit that the Freudians have had the best of it thus far. At least they have received the most publicity." It is in matters like their analysis of men and machines, of Mr. C and the automobile, that the Freudians and I part company. Of course, the analysis above is simply Dr. Bisch's idea of what the Freudians would say, but I think he has got it down pretty well. Dr. Bisch himself leans toward the Freudian analysis of Mr. C, for he says in this same chapter, "An automobile bearing down upon you may be a sex symbol at that, you know, especially if you dream it." It is my contention, of course, that even if you dream it, it is probably not a sex symbol, but merely an automobile bearing down upon you. And if it bears down upon you in real life, I am sure it is an automobile. I have seen the same behavior that characterized Mr. C displayed by a squirrel (Mr. S) that lives in the grounds of my house in the country. He is a fairly tame squirrel, happily mated and not sex-hungry, if I am any judge, but nevertheless he frequently runs out toward my automobile, when I start down the driveway, and then hesitates, wavers, jumps forward and backward, and occasionally would run right into the car except that he is awfully fast on his feet and that I always hurriedly put on the brakes of the 1935 V-8 Sex Symbol that I drive.

I have seen this same behavior in the case of rabbits (notoriously uninfluenced by any sex symbols save those of other rabbits), dogs, pigeons, a doe, a young hawk (which flew at my car), a blue heron that I encountered on a country road in Vermont, and once, near Paul Smith's in the Adiron-

dacks, a fox. They all acted exactly like Mr. C. The hawk, unhappily, was killed. All the others escaped with nothing worse, I suppose, than a complete nervous collapse. Although I cannot claim to have been conversant with the private life and the secret compulsions, the psychoneuroses and the glandular activities of all these animals, it is nevertheless my confident and unswervable belief that there was nothing at all the matter with any one of them. Like Mr. C, they suddenly saw a car swiftly bearing down upon them, got excited, and lost their heads. I do not believe, you see, there was anything the matter with Mr. C, either. But I do believe that, after a thorough analysis lasting months, with a lot of harping on the incident of the automobile, something might very well come to be the matter with him. He might even actually get to suffering from the delusion that he believes automobiles are sex symbols.

It seems to me worthy of note that Dr. Bisch, in reciting the reactions of three persons in the face of an oncoming car, selected three men. What would have happened had they been Mrs. A, Mrs. B, and Mrs. C? You know as well as I do all three of them would have hesitated, wavered, jumped forward and backward, and finally run head on into the car if some man hadn't grabbed them (I used to know a motorist who, every time he approached a woman standing on a curb preparing to cross the street, shouted, "Hold it, stupid!") It is not too much to say that, with a car bearing down upon them, ninety-five women out of a hundred would act like Mr. C—or Mr. S, the squirrel, or Mr. F, the fox. But it is certainly too much to say that ninety-five out of every hundred women look upon an automobile as a sex symbol For one thing, Dr. Bisch points out that the automobile serves as a sex symbol because of the "mechanical principle involved." But only one woman in a thousand really knows anything about the mechanical principle involved in an automobile. And yet, as I have said, ninety-five out of a hundred would hesitate, waver, and jump, just as Mr. C did. I think we have the Freudians here If we haven't proved our case with rabbits and a blue heron, we have certainly proved it with women

To my notion, the effect of the automobile and of other mechanical contrivances on the state of our nerves, minds, and spirits is a problem which the popular psychologists whom I have dealt with know very little about. The sexual explanation of the relationship of man and the machine is not good enough To arrive at the real explanation, we have to begin very far back, as far back as Franklin and the kite, or at least as far back as a certain man and woman who appear in a book of stories written more than sixty years ago by Max Adeler. One story in this book tells about a housewife who bought a combination ironing board and card table, which some New England genius had thought up in his spare time. The husband, coming

home to find the devilish contraption in the parlor, was appalled. "What is that thing?" he demanded. His wife explained that it was a card table, but that if you pressed a button underneath, it would become an ironing board. Whereupon she pushed the button and the table leaped a foot into the air, extended itself, and became an ironing board. The story goes on to tell how the thing finally became so finely sensitized that it would change back and forth if you merely touched it—you didn't have to push the button. The husband stuck it in the attic (after it had leaped up and struck him a couple of times while he was playing euchre), and on windy nights it could be heard flopping and banging around, changing from a card table to an ironing board and back. The story serves as one example of our dread heritage of annoyance, shock, and terror arising out of the nature of mechanical contrivances per se. The mechanical principle involved in this damnable invention had, I believe, no relationship to sex whatsoever. There are certain analysts who see sex in anything, even a leaping ironing board, but I think we can ignore these scientists.

No man (to go on) who has wrestled with a self-adjusting card table can ever be quite the man he once was. If he arrives at the state where he hesitates, wavers, and jumps at every mechanical device he encounters, it is not, I submit, because he recognizes the enticements of sex in the device, but only because he recognizes the menace of the machine as such. There might very well be, in every descendant of the man we have been discussing, an inherited desire to jump at, and conquer, mechanical devices before they have a chance to turn into something twice as big and twice as menacing. It is not reasonable to expect that his children and their children will have entirely escaped the stigma of such traumata. I myself will never be the man I once was, nor will my descendants probably ever amount to much, because of a certain experience I had with an automobile.

I had gone out to the barn of my country place, a barn which was used both as a garage and a kennel, to quiet some large black poodles. It was 1 A.M. of a pitch-dark night in winter and the poodles had apparently been terrified by some kind of a prowler, a tramp, a turtle, or perhaps a fiend of some sort. Both my poodles and I myself believed, at the time, in fiends, and still do. Fiends who materialize out of nothing and nowhere, like winged pigweed or Russian thistle. I had quite a time quieting the dogs, because their panic spread to me and mine spread back to them again, in a kind of vicious circle. Finally, a hush as ominous as their uproar fell upon them, but they kept looking over their shoulders, in a kind of apprehensive way. "There's nothing to be afraid of," I told them as firmly as I could, and just at that moment the klaxon of my car, which was just behind me, began to shriek. Everybody has heard a klaxon on a car suddenly begin to sound,

I understand it is a short circuit that causes it. But very few people have heard one scream behind them while they were quieting six or eight alarmed poodles in the middle of the night in an old barn I jump now whenever I hear a klaxon, even the klaxon on my own car when I push the button intentionally. The experience has left its mark. Everybody, from the day of the jumping card table to the day of screaming klaxon, has had similar shocks. You can see the result, entirely unsuperinduced by sex, in the strained faces and muttering lips of people who pass you on the streets of great, highly mechanized cities. There goes a man who picked up one of those trick matchboxes that whir in your hands; there goes a woman who tried to change a fuse without turning off the current; and yonder toddles an ancient who cranked an old Reo with the spark advanced. Every person carries in his consciousness the old scar, or the fresh wound, of some harrowing misadventure with a contraption of some sort. I know people who would not deposit a nickel and a dime in a cigarette-vending machine and push the lever even if a diamond necklace came out. I know dozens who would not climb into an airplane even if it didn't move off the ground. In none of these people have I discerned what I would call a neurosis, an "exaggerated" fear, I have discerned only a natural caution in a world made up of gadgets that whir and whine and whiz and shriek and sometimes explode.

I should like to end with the case history of a friend of mine in Ohio named Harvey Lake. When he was only nineteen, the steering bar of an old electric runabout broke off in his hand, causing the machine to carry him through a fence and into the grounds of the Columbus School for Girls. He developed a fear of automobiles, trains, and every other kind of vehicle that was not pulled by a horse. Now, the psychologists would call this a complex and represent the fear as abnormal, but I see it as a purely reasonable apprehension. If Harvey Lake had, because he was catapulted into the grounds of the Columbus School for Girls, developed a fear of girls, I would call that a complex, but I don't call his normal fear of machines a complex. Harvey Lake never in his life got into a plane (he died in a fall from a porch), but I do not regard that as neurotic, either, but only sensible.

I have, to be sure, encountered men with complexes. There was, for example, Marvin Belt He had a complex about airplanes that was quite interesting. He was not afraid of machinery, or of high places, or of crashes. He was simply afraid that the pilot of any plane he got into might lose his mind. "I imagine myself high over Montana," he once said to me, "in a huge, perfectly safe tri-motored plane. Several of the passengers are dozing, others are reading, but I am keeping my eyes glued on the door to the cockpit. Suddenly the pilot steps out of it, a wild light in his eyes, and in a falsetto like that of a little girl he says to me, 'Conductor, will you please let me off at

One-Hundred-and-Twenty-fifth Street?' " "But," I said to Belt, "even if the pilot does go crazy, there is still the co-pilot." "No, there isn't," said Belt. "The pilot has hit the co-pilot over the head with something and killed him." Yes, the psychoanalysts can have Marvin Belt. But they can't have Harvey Lake, or Mr. C, or Mr. S, or Mr. F, or, while I have my strength, me.

THOMAS WOLFE AND THE AMERICAN DREAM



IN THE GREAT and many-sided talent that was Thomas Wolfe's, the sound of satire was but one of many orchestral tones Lyrical, dramatic, tragic, uproarious, Gargantuan, and overwhelming, he built his novels into tremendous symphonic structures, pouring his emotions out in a huge glut and torrent that fill page after singing page with rejoicing, lamentation, gusto, fury, and despair. No genre is big enough for his enormous grasp, he breaks all molds. Entangled and tortured in self-examination almost to narcissism, he paints Eugene Gant and Monk Webber in turn, both violent and unescapable projections of himself. And yet no writer so persistently introspective has a broader canvas of social observation or paints so many people in bold and penetrating strokes. His delineation of them ranges all the way from fierce travesty to tender and tragic sympathy His tone, although always characteristically flowing and abundant, runs the gamut from harsh naturalism to those great dithyrambic incantations in which he celebrates trains plunging across the country through the night, curling down the sides of mountains and into dark valleys, racing past the lights of lonely farms and roaring through the empty streets of towns.

Ultimately he is both lyric and epic, vibrant and drenched as no other writer save Walt Whitman with the life and spirit of America itself.

But beneath this soaring melody, satire is a ground tone which we hear sounding more and more persistently until in Wolfe's final period it becomes dominant. Wolfe's career thus becomes further evidence of how characteristic a mode of expression satire is for our time, and of its being no accident that so many major voices among our novelists have a powerful strain of satire in their work Wolfe himself writes, "Satiric exaggeration belongs to the nature of life, and particularly American life." How could any sensitive American live through this last half century during which America ceased to be a provincial outpost of Europe and became a world power and a world center without feeling that there was something extravagant in the contour of American destiny? How could anyone pass from the primitiveness of spiritual background that Wolfe knew in his childhood to the glittering subtlety of urban culture without feeling that there was something fantastic about the pattern of modern life? How could anyone look beneath the gleaming surface of all this power and success, and not see how much was contradictory, false, hollow, and cruel? No wonder, then, that "the satiric note grows steadily stroriger" in Wolfe, as Maxwell Geismar says, "until his last volume contains such devastating critiques of American society."

Wolfe's power as a satirist depends largely upon his command over invective and burlesque. His irony is apt to be that of a young giant who has no idea of his strength and who imagines he is being delicate and restrained when he is flattening something beyond recognition; it alternates between a clumsy callowness and a battering with blows as of Thor's hammer. Indeed, Wolfe is comically like the hero in one of A. P. Herbert's poems, who

could not walk into a room
Without ejaculating, "Boom!"

But these very qualities, which make him a heavy-handed ironist, help to magnify his fanfaronades of abuse and his wild parodies into a kind of gigantic and overpowering horseplay.

Merely by shifting the field of application, Monk Webber renders ridiculous the preciosity and mannered quaintness of the drama critic who has lauded Esther's stage settings in highly wrought phrases· "Will you make these old eyes shine with a chop?" "Will you put your deft whimsy in a steak?" "Will you make me one of your sauces that is subtle, search-

ing, and hushed?" Or, for pure tirade, notice this single sentence from his praise of the editor Foxhall Edwards, which says almost absolutely nothing against its victims, but rolls them in an irresistible hilarity: "He was none of your little franky-panky, seldesey-weldesey, cowley-wowley, tatesy-watesy, hicksy-picksy, wilsony-pilsony, jolasy-wolasy, steiny-weiny, goldy-woldy, sneer-puss fellows." In such passages Wolfe is a brilliant illustration of what can be done with a minimum of statement by sheer comic eloquence.

The satire in Wolfe's first novel, Look Homeward, Angel, is almost purely personal, centered upon the members of Eugene Gant's family. We have the roaring bombast and rhetoric of old Gant's Elizabethan rodomontade; the insensate miserly string-collecting and bottle-saving of Eugene's mother Eliza; Steve's combination of bullying swagger and foul-breathed whining; Helen's furious energy, her wild "K-k-k-k" of laughter over some parody of their mother ("Law me, child. H-m! Yes. It's good soup"), and her dark slave-driven hysteria. We have Luke's crazy chortling, his Rabelaisian humor, and his stammering need for popularity; Ben's lean, gray bitterness, and his sideways appeal to some dark angel. "Oh, my God! Will you listen to that now?" And we have Eugene's agonized outburst against Eliza's lurid penny-pinching. "Mama, mama, in God's name what is it? What do you want? Are you going to strangle and drown us all? Don't you own enough? Do you want more string? Do you want more bottles? . . . Do you want the town? What is it?"

In Of Time and the River the satiric perception grows and blossoms into those wonderful pages describing Professor Hatcher and the students in his celebrated course in the drama, the Murphys and the lower-middle-class Boston Irish, and the terrors, jealousies, and hatreds of teaching in the great urban university. Personal satire is continued in the portrait of Bascom Pentland and Eugene's antics with the Simpsons, mother and daughter, but it is becoming submerged in satire of more widespread significance Wolfe's insight into the members of the drama course is profound and pitiful:

"They belonged to that huge tribe of all the damned and lost who feel that everything is going to be all right with them if they can only take a trip, or learn a rule, or meet a person. They belonged to that futile, desolate, and forsaken horde who felt that all will be well with their lives, that all the power they lack themselves will be supplied . . . if only they eat bran for breakfast, secure an introduction to a celebrated actress, get a

reading for their manuscript by a friend of Sinclair Lewis, or win admission to Professor Hatcher's celebrated class of dramatists."

Apprentices in the academic world can bear witness to the terrible truth with which Wolfe portrays its hidden struggles: "They wasted and grew sick with hate and poison because another man received promotion, because another man had his poem printed, because another man had eaten food and swallowed drink . . . and they whispered with trembling lips: 'Has he spoken to you yet?' 'Has he said anything to you yet about next year?' 'Are you coming back next year?' 'Did he say anything to you about me next year?'"

The implications of such scenes go far deeper than uncovering how pitiful is the pretense of scholarly detachment and academic calm. These poor miserable collegiate hacks show in a more poignant form the fear-haunted insecurity that Sinclair Lewis hinted beneath the placid surface of Zenith's plump middle class, and that Wolfe was to reveal even more feverishly in the infernal competitive tension of the Federal Weight, Scales, and Computing Company, with its dreadful Heaven of "the Hundred Club," its Hell of being "no longer with the Company," and its desperate, orgiastic "Week of Play." The glittering shell of the world cracks beneath such hammer blows, and reveals the dark things beneath.

Throughout both The Web and the Rock *and* You Can't Go Home Again *are scattered satiric diatribes on all the literary, artistic, and social movements and crazes that have agitated the surface of our cultural life: ivory-tower aestheticism, debunking, primitivism, expressionism, psychoanalysis, the new humanism, Southern agrarianism, retreat to the farm, highbrow communism. But even more significant are the chapters in* You Can't Go Home Again *devoted to painting the madness of the twenties, Libya Hill feverish with speculation, the obscene outrages of high-pressure salesmanship, the dying orgies of the bull market. There is something almost prophetically terrifying in Wolfe's denunciations of a callously luxurious world of wealth and fashion holding its gorgeous revels in lofty Babylonian gardens and applauding Mr. Piggy Logan's circus while its own foundations tremble:*

"The highest intelligences of the time—the very subtlest of the chosen few—were bored with many things. . . . They were bored with going abroad, and they were bored with staying at home. They were bored with the great poets of the world whose great poems they had never read. They were bored with hunger in the streets, with the men who were killed, with the

children who starved, and with the injustice, cruelty, and oppression all around them . . . They were bored with living, they were bored with dying, but—they were not *bored that year with Mr. Piggy Logan and his circus of wire dolls."*

And meanwhile this symbolically entitled "House That Jack Built," seeming so powerful, as if founded upon a rock, shivers mysteriously at intervals to subterranean agitations, and cavernous noises come up from the depths of the earth. These rumblings of doom are not merely a knell for a system Wolfe has at last encompassed and condemned. They are prophetic, as well, of his larger hope for the American promise of generosity and freedom "I think these forms are dying, and must die, just as I know that America and the people in it are deathless, undiscovered, and immortal, and must live.

"I think the true discovery of America is before us. I think the true fulfillment of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land is yet to come I think the true discovery of our own democracy is still before us And I think that all these things are as certain as the morning, as inevitable as noon I think I speak for most men living when I say that our America is Here, is Now, and beckons on before us, and that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished."

YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

««« *You Can't Go Home Again* was published in 1940, two years after Wolfe died. The selection given here is Chapter 8, "The Company," from Book I, "The Native's Return" »»»

A High-Pressure World: Its Heaven and Hell

GEORGE CONSIDERED himself lucky to have the little room over the Shepperton garage. He was also glad that his visit had overlapped that of Mr. David Merrit, and that Mr. Merrit had been allowed to enjoy undisturbed the greater comfort of the Shepperton guest room, for Mr. Merrit had filled him with a pleasant glow at their first meeting. He was a ruddy, plump, well-kept man of forty-five or so, always ready with a joke and immensely agreeable, with pockets bulging with savory cigars which he handed out to people on the slightest provocation. Randy had spoken of him as "the Company's man," and, although George did not know what the duties of a "Company's man" were, Mr. Merrit made them seem very pleasant.

George knew, of course, that Mr. Merrit was Randy's boss, and he learned that Mr. Merrit was in the habit of coming to town every two or three months. He would arrive like a benevolent, pink-cheeked Santa Claus, making his jolly little jokes, passing out his fat cigars, putting his arm around people's shoulders, and, in general, making everyone feel good. As he said himself:

"I've got to turn up now and then just to see that the boys are behaving themselves, and not taking in any wooden nickels."

Here he winked at George in such a comical way that all of them had to grin. Then he gave George a big cigar.

His functions seemed to be ambassadorial. He was always taking Randy and the salesmen of the Company out to lunch or dinner, and, save for brief visits to the office, he seemed to spend most of his time inaugurating an era of good feeling and high living. He would go around town and meet everybody, slapping people on the back and calling them by their first names, and for a week after he had left the business men of Libya Hill would still be smoking his cigars. When he came to town he always stayed "out at the

house," and one knew that Margaret would prepare her best meals for him, and that there would be some good drinks. Mr. Merrit supplied the drinks himself, for he always brought along a plentiful store of expensive beverages. George could see at their first meeting that he was the kind of man who exudes an aura of good fellowship, and that was why it was so pleasant to have Mr. Merrit staying in the house.

Mr. Merrit was not only a nice fellow. He was also "with the Company," and George soon realized that "the Company" was a vital and mysterious force in all their lives. Randy had gone with it as soon as he left college. He had been sent to the main office, up North somewhere, and had been put through a course of training. Then he had come back South and had worked his way up from salesman to district agent—an important member of the sales organization.

"The Company," "district agent," "the sales organization"—mysterious titles all of them, but most comforting During the week George was in Libya Hill with Randy and Margaret, Mr. Merrit was usually on hand at meal times, and at night he would sit out on the front porch with them and carry on in his jolly way, joking and laughing and giving them all a good time. Sometimes he would talk shop with Randy, telling stories about the Company and about his own experiences in the organization, and before long George began to pick up a pretty good idea of what it was all about.

The Federal Weight, Scales, and Computing Company was a far-flung empire which had a superficial aspect of great complexity, but in its essence it was really beautifully simple. Its heart and soul—indeed, its very life—was its sales organization.

The entire country was divided into districts, and over each district an agent was appointed. This agent, in turn, employed salesmen to cover the various portions of his district Each district also had an "office man" to attend to any business that might come up while the agent and his salesmen were away, and a "repair man" whose duty it was to overhaul damaged or broken-down machines. Together, these comprised the agency, and the country was so divided that there was, on the average, an agency for every unit of half a million people in the total population Thus there were two hundred and sixty or seventy agencies through the nation, and the agents with their salesmen made up a working force of from twelve to fifteen hundred men.

The higher purposes of this industrial empire, which the employees almost never referred to by name, as who should speak of the deity with coarse directness, but always with a just perceptible lowering and huskiness of the voice as "the Company"—these higher purposes were also beau-

tifully simple. They were summed up in the famous utterance of the Great Man himself, Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, who invariably repeated it every year as a peroration to his hour-long address before the assembled members of the sales organization at their national convention. Standing before them at the close of each year's session, he would sweep his arm in a gesture of magnificent command toward an enormous map of the United States of America that covered the whole wall behind him, and say:

"There's your market! Go out and sell them!"

What could be simpler and more beautiful than this? What could more eloquently indicate that mighty sweep of the imagination which has been celebrated in the annals of modern business under the name of "vision"? The words had the spacious scope and austere directness that have characterized the utterances of great leaders in every epoch of man's history. It is Napoleon speaking to his troops in Egypt: "Soldiers, from the summit of yonder pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you." It is Captain Perry: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." It is Dewey at Manila Bay: "You may fire when ready, Gridley." It is Grant before Spottsylvania Court House: "I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer."

So when Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, waved his arm at the wall and said "There's your market! Go out and sell them!"—the assembled captains, lieutenants, and privates in the ranks of his sales organization knew that there were still giants in the earth, and that the age of romance was not dead.

True, there had once been a time when the aspirations of the Company had been more limited. That was when the founder of the institution, the grandfather of Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, had expressed his modest hopes by saying. "I should like to see one of my machines in every store, shop, or business that needs one, and that can afford to pay for one." But the self-denying restrictions implicit in the founder's statement had long since become so out of date as to seem utterly mid-Victorian. Mr. David Merrit admitted it himself. Much as he hated to speak ill of any man, and especially the founder of the Company, he had to confess that by the standards of 1929 the old gentleman had lacked vision.

"That's old stuff now," said Mr. Merrit, shaking his head and winking at George, as though to take the curse off of his treason to the founder by making a joke of it. "We've gone way beyond that!" he exclaimed with pardonable pride. "Why, if we waited nowadays to sell a machine to someone who *needs* one, we'd get nowhere." He was nodding now at Randy, and speaking with the seriousness of deep conviction. "We don't wait until he *needs* one. If he says he's getting along all right without one, we make him buy one anyhow. We make him *see* the need, don't we, Randy? In other words, we *create* the need."

This, as Mr. Merrit went on to explain, was what is known in more technical phrase as "creative salesmanship" or "creating the market." And this poetic conception was the inspired work of one man—none other than the present head of the Company, Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, himself The idea had come to him in a single blinding flash, born full-blown like Pallas Athene from the head of Zeus, and Mr. Merrit still remembered the momentous occasion as vividly as if it had been only yesterday. It was at one of the meetings of the assembled parliaments of the Company that Mr. Appleton, soaring in an impassioned flight of oratory, became so intoxicated with the grandeur of his own vision that he stopped abruptly in the middle of a sentence and stood there as one entranced, gazing out dreamily into the unknown vistas of magic Canaan; and when he at last went on again, it was in a voice surcharged with quivering emotion·

"My friends," he said, "the possibilities of the market, now that we see how to create it, are practically unlimited!" Here he was silent for a moment, and Mr. Merrit said that the Great Man actually paled and seemed to stagger as he tried to speak, and that his voice faltered and sank to an almost inaudible whisper, as if he himself could hardly comprehend the magnitude of his own conception. "My friends—" he muttered thickly, and was seen to clutch the rostrum for support—"my friends—seen properly—" he whispered, and moistened his dry lips—"seen properly—the market we shall create being what it is—" his voice grew stronger, and the clarion words now rang forth—"there is no reason why one of our machines should not be in the possession of every man, woman, and child in the United States!" Then came the grand, familiar gesture to the map "There's your market, boys! Go out and sell them!"

Henceforth this vision became the stone on which Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, erected the magnificent edifice of the true church and living faith which was called "the Company." And in the service of this vision Mr Appleton built up an organization which worked with the beautiful precision of a locomotive piston. Over the salesman was the agent, and over the agent was the district supervisor, and over the district supervisor was the district manager, and over the district manager was the general manager, and over the general manager was—if not God himself, then the next thing to it, for the agents and salesmen referred to him in tones of proper reverence as "P. S A."

Mr. Appleton also invented a special Company Heaven known as the Hundred Club. Its membership was headed by P. S. A , and all the ranks of the sales organization were eligible, down to the humblest salesman The Hundred Club was a social order, but it was also a good deal more than that. Each agent and salesman had a "quota"—that is to say, a certain amount

of business which was assigned to him as the normal average of his district and capacity. A man's quota differed from another's according to the size of his territory, its wealth, and his own experience and ability. One man's quota would be sixty, another's eighty, another's ninety or one hundred, and if he was a district agent, his quota would be higher than that of a mere salesman. Each man, however, no matter how small or how large his quota might be, was eligible for membership in the Hundred Club, the only restriction being that he must average one hundred per cent of his quota. If he averaged more—if he got, say, one hundred and twenty per cent of his quota—there were appropriate honors and rewards, not only social but financial as well. One could be either high up or low down in the Hundred Club, for it had almost as many degrees of merit as the Masonic order.

The unit of the quota system was "the point," and a point was forty dollars' worth of business. So if a salesman had a quota of eighty, this meant that he had to sell the products of the Federal Weight, Scales, and Computing Company to the amount of at least $3200 every month, or almost $40,000 a year. The rewards were high A salesman's commission was from fifteen to twenty per cent of his sales; and agent's, from twenty to twenty-five per cent. Beyond this there were bonuses to be earned by achieving or surpassing his quota. Thus it was possible for an ordinary salesman in an average district to earn from $6000 to $8000 a year, while an agent could earn from $12,000 to $15,000, and even more if his district was an exceptionally good one.

So much for the rewards of Mr. Appleton's Heaven. But what would Heaven be if there were no Hell? So Mr. Appleton was forced by the logic of the situation to invent a Hell, too. Once a man's quota was fixed at any given point, the Company never reduced it. Moreover, if a salesman's quota was eighty points and he achieved it during the year, he must be prepared at the beginning of the new year to find that his quota had been increased to ninety points. One had to go onward and upward constantly, and the race was to the swift.

While it was quite true that membership in the Hundred Club was not compulsory, it was also true that Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, was a theologian who, like Calvin, knew how to combine free will and predestination. If one did *not* belong to the Hundred Club, the time was not far distant when one would not belong to Mr. Appleton. Not to belong to it was, for agent or salesman, the equivalent of living on the other side of the railroad tracks. If one failed of admission to the Company Heaven, or if one dropped out, his fellows would begin to ask guardedly: "Where's Joe Klutz these days?" The answers would be vague, and in the course of time Joe Klutz would be

spoken of no more. He would fade into oblivion. He was "no longer with the Company."

Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, never had but the one revelation—the one which Mr. Merrit so movingly described—but that was enough, and he never let its glories and allurements grow dim. Four times a year, at the beginning of each quarter, he would call his general manager before him and say: "What's the matter, Elmer? You're not getting the business! The market is *there!* You know what you can do about it—or else . . . !" Thereupon the general manager would summon the district managers one by one and repeat to them the words and manner of P. S. A., and the district managers would reenact the scene before each of the district supervisors, who would duplicate it to the agents, who would pass it on to the salesmen, who, since they had no one below them, would "get out and hustle—or else!" This was called "keeping up the morale of the organization."

As Mr. David Merrit sat on the front porch and told of his many experiences with the Company, his words conveyed to George Webber a great deal more than he actually said. For his talk went on and on in its vein of mellow reminiscence, and Mr. Merrit made his little jokes and puffed contentedly at one of his own good cigars, and everything he said carried an overtone of "What a fine and wonderful thing it is to be connected with the Company!"

He told, for example, about the splendid occasion every year when all the members of the Hundred Club were brought together for what was known as "The Week of Play." This was a magnificent annual outing conducted "at the Company's expense." The meeting place might be in Philadelphia or Washington, or in the tropic opulence of Los Angeles or Miami, or it might be on board a chartered ship—one of the small but luxurious twenty-thousand-tonners that ply the transatlantic routes—bound to Bermuda or Havana. Wherever it was, the Hundred Club was given a free sweep. If the journey was by sea, the ship was theirs—for a week. All the liquor in the world was theirs, if they could drink it—and Bermuda's coral isles, or the unlicensed privilege of gay Havana. For that one week everything on earth that money could buy was at the command of the members of the Hundred Club, everything was done on the grand scale, and the Company—the immortal, paternal, and great-hearted Company—"paid for everything."

But as Mr. Merrit painted his glowing picture of the fun they had on these occasions, George Webber saw quite another image. It was an image of twelve or fifteen hundred men—for on these pilgrimages, by general consent, women (or, at any rate, wives) were debarred—twelve or fifteen

hundred men, Americans, most of them in their middle years, exhausted, overwrought, their nerves frayed down and stretched to the breaking point, met from all quarters of the continent "at the Company's expense" for one brief, wild, gaudy week of riot. And George thought grimly what this tragic spectacle of business men at play meant in terms of the entire scheme of things and the plan of life that had produced it. He began to understand, too, the changes which time had brought about in Randy.

The last day of his week in Libya Hill, George had gone to the station to buy his return ticket and he stopped in at Randy's office a little before one o'clock to go home to lunch with him. The outer salesroom, with its shining stock of scales and computing machines imposingly arrayed on walnut pedestals, was deserted, so he sat down to wait. On one wall hung a gigantic colored poster. "August Was the Best Month in Federal History," it read. "*Make September a Better One!* The Market's There, Mr. Agent. The Rest Is Up to You!"

Behind the salesroom was a little partitioned space which served Randy as an office. As George waited, gradually he became aware of mysterious sounds emanating from beyond the partition. First there was the rustle of heavy paper, as if the pages of a ledger were being turned, and occasionally there would be a quick murmur of hushed voices, confidential, ominous, interspersed with grunts and half-suppressed exclamations. Then all at once there were two loud bangs, as of a large ledger being slammed shut and thrown upon a desk or table, and after a moment's silence the voices rose louder, distinct, plainly audible. Instantly he recognized Randy's voice —low, grave, hesitant, and deeply troubled. The other voice he had never heard before.

But as he listened to that voice he began to tremble and grow white about the lips. For its very tone was a foul insult to human life, an ugly sneer whipped across the face of decent humanity, and as he realized that that voice, these words, were being used against his friend, he had a sudden blind feeling of murder in his heart. And what was so perplexing and so troubling was that this devil's voice had in it as well a curiously familiar note, as of someone he had known.

Then it came to him in a flash—it was Merrit speaking! The owner of that voice, incredible as it seemed, was none other than that plump, well-kept, jolly-looking man who had always been so full of hearty cheerfulness and good spirits every time he had seen him.

Now, behind that little partition of glazed glass and varnished wood, this man's voice had suddenly become fiendish. It was inconceivable, and

as George listened he grew sick, as one does in some awful nightmare when he visions someone he knows doing some perverse and abominable act. But what was most dreadful of all was Randy's voice, humble, low, submissive, modestly entreating. Merrit's voice would cut across the air like a gob of rasping phlegm, and then Randy's voice—gentle, hesitant, deeply troubled—would come in from time to time in answer.

"Well, what's the matter? Don't you want the job?"

"Why—why, yes, you know I do, Dave—haw-w—" and Randy's voice lifted a little in a troubled and protesting laugh.

"What's the matter that you're not getting the business?"

"Why—haw-w!—" again the little laugh, embarrassed and troubled—"I *thought* I was——"

"Well, you're not!" that rasping voice cut in like a knife. "This district *ought to deliver thirty per cent more business than you're getting from it,* and the Company *is going to have it,* too—or else! You deliver or you go right out on your can! See? The Company doesn't give a damn about you! *It's after the business!* You've been *around a long time,* but *you don't mean* a damn bit more to the Company than anybody else! And you know what's *happened to a lot of other guys who got to feeling they were too big for* their job—don't you?"

"Why—why, yes, Dave—but—haw-w!" the little laugh again—"but—honestly, I never thought——"

"We don't give a damn what you never thought!" the brutal voice ripped in. "I've given you fair warning now! You get the business or out you go!"

The glazed glass door burst open violently and Merrit came striding out of the little partitioned office. When he saw George, he looked startled. Then *he was instantly transformed. His plump and ruddy face became* wreathed in smiles, and he cried out in a hearty tone:

"Well, well, well! Look who's here! If it's not the old boy himself!"

Randy had followed him out, and Merrit now turned and winked humorously at him, *in the manner of a man who is carrying on a little bantering* byplay:

"Randy," he said, *"I believe George gets better looking from day to day.* Has he broken any hearts yet?"

Randy tried to *smile, grey-faced and haggardly.*

"I bet you're burning them up in the Big Town," said Merrit, turning back to George. *"And, say, I read that piece in the paper about your book.* Great stuff, son! We're all proud of you!"

He gave George a hearty slap on the back and turned away with an air of jaunty readiness, picked up his hat, and said cheerfully:

"Well, what d'ya say, folks? What about one of Margaret's famous meals, out at the old homestead? Well, you can't hurt my feelings. I'm ready if you are. Let's go!"

And, smiling, ruddy, plump, cheerful, a perverted picture of amiable good will to all the world, he sauntered through the door. For a moment the two old friends just stood there looking at each other, white and haggard, with a bewildered expression in their eyes. In Randy's eyes there was also a look of shame. With that instinct for loyalty which was one of the roots of his soul, he said:

"Dave's a good fellow. . . . You—you see, he's got to do these things. . . . He—he's with the Company."

George didn't say anything. For as Randy spoke, and George remembered all that Merrit had told him about the Company, a terrific picture flashed through his mind. It was a picture he had seen in a gallery somewhere, portraying a long line of men stretching from the Great Pyramid to the very portals of great Pharaoh's house, and great Pharaoh stood with a thonged whip in his hand and applied it unmercifully to the bare back and shoulders of the man in front of him, who was great Pharaoh's chief overseer, and in the hand of the overseer was a whip of many tails which he unstintedly applied to the quivering back of the wretch before him, who was the chief overseer's chief lieutenant, and in the lieutenant's hand a whip of rawhide which he laid vigorously on the quailing body of his head sergeant, and in the sergeant's hand a wicked flail with which he belabored a whole company of groaning corporals, and in the hands of every corporal a knotted lash with which to whack a whole regiment of slaves, who pulled and hauled and bore burdens and toiled and sweated and built the towering structure of the pyramid.

So George didn't say anything. He couldn't. He had just found out something about life that he had not known before.

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A Note About the Author

EDGAR JOHNSON *belongs, as* The Saturday Review of Literature *has said, to that small company of critics and writers who combine fully informed and accurate scholarship with a broad philosophical understanding and a full feeling for the richness and variety of human life. This liberal and well-balanced judgment has marked his success in a variety of fields. He is the author of two novels of distinguished merit,* Unweave a Rainbow *and* The Praying Mantis. *In the field of literary history and criticism, his* One Mighty Torrent: The Drama of Biography *was judged one of the hundred best books of 1937 and received with widespread acclaim. He has been on the faculties of Columbia and Washington Universities and Vassar College, and is now assistant professor of English at the College of the City of New York. For the past ten years he has lectured at the New School for Social Research on satire, biography, and literary criticism, and has appeared at many other institutions. He is a frequent contributor to both popular and scholarly periodicals.*